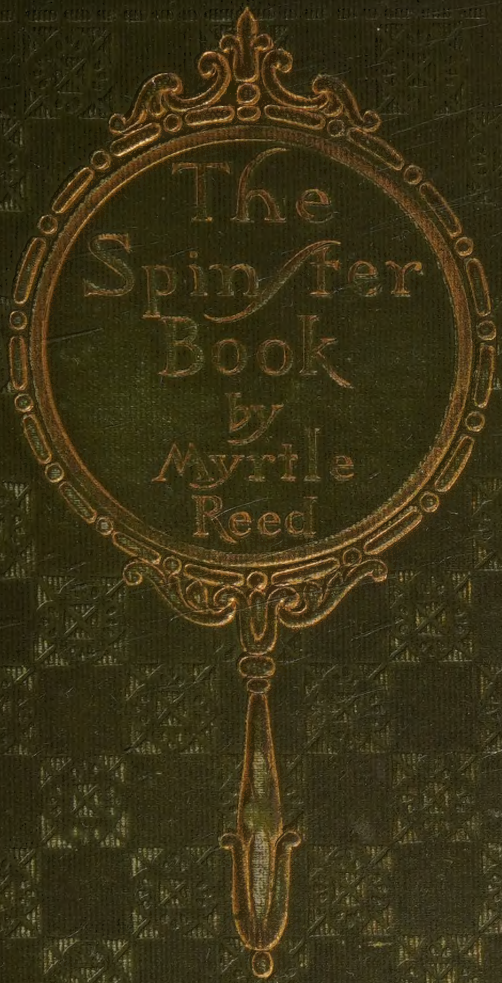
The
Spinster
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by
Myrtle
Reed

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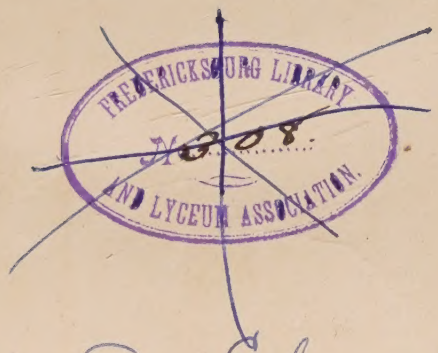

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By Myrtle Reed

LOVE LETTERS OF A MUSICIAN
LATER LOVE LETTERS OF A MUSICIAN
THE SPINSTER BOOK

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
New York London

The Spinster Book

By Myrtle Reed

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1901

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MYRTLE REED

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

Contents

	PAGE
Notes on Men	3
Concerning Women	25
The Philosophy of Love	49
The Lost Art of Courtship	71
The Natural History of Proposals	93
Love Letters: Old and New	115
An Inquiry into Marriage	137
The Physiology of Vanity	161
Widowers and Widows	183
The Consolations of Spinsterhood	205

Notes on Men

Notes on Men

"The Proper Study"

IF "the proper study of mankind is man," it is also the chief delight of woman. It is not surprising that men are conceited, since the thought of the entire population is centred upon them.

Women are wont to consider man in general as a simple creation. It is not until the individual comes into the field of the feminine telescope, and his peculiarities are thrown into high relief, that he is seen and judged at his true value.

When a girl once turns her attention from the species to the individual, her parlour becomes a sort of psychological laboratory in which she conducts various experiments; not, however, without the loss of friends. For men are impatient of the spirit of inquiry in woman.

How shall a girl acquire her knowledge of the phenomena of affection, if men are not

The Phenomena of Affection

willing to be questioned upon the subject? What is more natural than to seek wisdom from the man a girl has just refused to marry? Why should she not ask if he has ever loved before, how long he has loved her, if he were not surprised when he found it out, and how he feels in her presence?

Yet a sensitive spinster is repeatedly astonished at finding her lover transformed into a fiend, without other provocation than this. He accuses her of being "a heartless coquette," of having "led him on,"—whatever that may mean,—and he does not care to have her for his sister, or even for his friend.

Occasionally a charitable man will open his heart for the benefit of the patient student. If he is of a scientific turn of mind, with a fondness for original research, he may even take a melancholy pleasure in the analysis.

Thus she learns that he thought he had loved, until he cared for her, but in the light of the new passion he sees clearly that the others were mere, idle flirtations. To her surprise, she also discovers that he has loved her a long time but has never dared to speak of it before, and that this feeling, compared

Original Research

with the others, is as wine unto water. In her presence he is uplifted, exalted, and often afraid, for very love of her.

Next to a proposal, the most interesting thing in the world to a woman is this kind of analysis. If a man is clever at it, he may change a decided refusal to a timid promise to "think about it." The man who hesitates may be lost, but the woman who hesitates is surely won.

In the beginning, the student is often perplexed by the magnitude of the task which lies before her. Later, she comes to know that men, like cats, need only to be stroked in the right direction. The problem thus becomes a question of direction, which is seldom as simple as it looks.

Yet men, as a class, are easier to understand than women, because they are less emotional. It is emotion which complicates the personal equation with radicals and quadratics, and life which proceeds upon predestined lines soon becomes monotonous and loses its charm. The involved x in the equation continually postpones the definite result, which may often be surmised, but never achieved.

The Personal Equation

Still, there is little doubt as to the proper method, for some of the radicals must necessarily appear in the result. Man's conceit is his social foundation and when the vulnerable spot is once found in the armour of Achilles, the overthrow of the strenuous Greek is near at hand.

There is nothing in the world as harmless and as utterly joyous as man's conceit. The woman who will not pander to it is ungracious indeed.

Man's interest in himself is purely altruistic and springs from an unselfish desire to please. He values physical symmetry because one's first impression of him is apt to be favourable. Manly accomplishments and evidences of good breeding are desirable for the same reason, and he likes to think his way of doing things is the best, regardless of actual effectiveness.

For instance, there seems to be no good reason why a man's way of sharpening a pencil is any better than a woman's. It is difficult to see just why it is advisable to cover the thumb with powdered graphite, and expose that useful member to possible amputation by a knife directed uncompromisingly

Pencils

toward it, when the pencil might be pointed the other way, the risk of amputation avoided, and the shavings and pulverised graphite left safely to the action of gravitation and centrifugal force. Yet the entire race of men refuse to see the true value of the feminine method, and, indeed, any man would rather sharpen any woman's pencil than see her do it herself.

It pleases a man very much to be told that he "knows the world," even though his acquaintance be limited to the flesh and the devil — a gentleman, by the way, who is much misunderstood and whose faults are persistently exaggerated. But man's supreme conceit is in regard to his personal appearance. Let a single entry in a laboratory notebook suffice for proof.

Time, evening. MAN *is reading a story in a current magazine to the* GIRL *he is calling upon.*

MAN. "Are you interested in this?"

GIRL. "Certainly, but I can think of other things too, can't I?"

MAN. "That depends on the 'other things.' What are they?"

GIRL. (*Calmly.*) "I was just thinking that

The "Supreme Conceit"

you are an extremely handsome man, but of course you know that."

MAN. (*Crimsoning to his temples.*) "You flatter me!" (*Resumes reading.*)

GIRL. (*Awaits developments.*)

MAN. (*After a little.*) "I did n't know you thought I was good-looking."

GIRL. (*Demurely.*) "Did n't you?"

MAN. (*Clears his throat and continues the story.*)

MAN. (*After a few minutes.*) "Did you ever hear anybody else say that?"

GIRL. "Say what?"

MAN. "Why, that I was — that I was — well, good-looking, you know?"

GIRL. "Oh, yes! Lots of people!"

MAN. (*After reading half a page.*) "I don't think this is so very interesting, do you?"

GIRL. "No, it is n't. It does n't carry out the promise of its beginning."

MAN. (*Closes magazine and wanders aimlessly toward the mirror in the mantel.*)

MAN. "Which way do you like my hair; this way, or parted in the middle?"

GIRL. "I don't know—this way, I guess. I 've never seen it parted in the middle."

The "Supreme Conceit"

MAN. (*Taking out pocket comb and rapidly parting his hair in the middle.*) "There! Which way do you like it?"

GIRL. (*Judicially.*) "I don't know. It's really a very hard question to decide."

MAN. (*Reminiscently.*) "I've gone off my looks a good deal lately. I used to be a lot better looking than I am now."

GIRL. (*Softly.*) "I'm glad I did n't know you then."

MAN. (*In apparent astonishment.*) "Why?"

GIRL. "Because I might not have been heart whole, as I am now."

(*Long silence.*)

MAN. (*With sudden enthusiasm.*) "I 'll tell you, though, I really do look well in evening dress."

GIRL. "I have n't a doubt of it, even though I 've never seen you wear it."

MAN. (*After brief meditation.*) "Let 's go and hear Melba next week, will you? I meant to ask you when I first came in, but we got to reading."

GIRL. "I shall be charmed."

Next day, GIRL *gets a box of chocolates and a dozen American Beauties—in February at that.*

Dimples and Dress Clothes

Tell a man he has a dimple and he will say "where?" in pleased surprise, meanwhile putting his finger straight into it. He has studied that dimple in the mirror too many times to be unmindful of its geography.

Let the woman dearest to a man say, tenderly: "You were so handsome to-night, dear—I was proud of you." See his face light up with noble, unselfish joy, because he has given such pleasure to others!

All the married men at evening receptions have gone because they "look so well in evening dress," and because "so few men can wear dress clothes really well." In truth, it does require distinction and grace of bearing, if a man would not be mistaken for a waiter.

Man's conceit is not love of himself but of his fellow-men. The man who is in love with himself need not fear that any woman will ever become a serious rival. Not unfrequently, when a man asks a woman to marry him, he means that he wants her to help him love himself, and if, blinded by her own feeling, she takes him for her captain, her pleasure craft becomes a pirate ship, the colours change

Palmistry

to a black flag with a sinister sign, and her inevitable destiny is the coral reef.

Palmistry does very well for a beginning if a man is inclined to be shy. It leads by gentle and almost imperceptible degrees to that most interesting of all subjects, himself, and to that tactful comment, dearest of all to the masculine heart; "You are not like other men!"

A man will spend an entire evening, utterly oblivious of the lapse of time, while a woman subjects him to careful analysis. But sympathy, rather than sarcasm, must be her guide —if she wants him to come again. A man will make a comrade of the woman who stimulates him to higher achievement, but he will love the one who makes herself a mirror for his conceit.

Men claim that women cannot keep a secret, but it is a common failing. A man will always tell some one person the thing which is told him in confidence. If he is married, he tells his wife. Then the exclusive bit of news is rapidly syndicated, and by gentle degrees, the secret is diffused through the community. This is the most pathetic thing in matrimony

Exchange of Confidence

—the regularity with which husbands relate the irregularities of their friends. Very little of the world's woe is caused by silence, however it may be in fiction and the drama.

In return for the generous confidence regarding other people's doings, the married man is made conversant with those things which his wife deems it right and proper for him to know. And he is not unhappy, for it is n't what he does n't know that troubles a man, but what he knows he does n't know.

The masculine nature is less capable of concealment than the feminine. Where men are frankly selfish, women are secretly so. Man's vices are few and comprehensive; woman's petty and innumerable. Any man who is not in the penitentiary has at most but three or four, while a woman will hide a dozen under her social mask and defy detection.

Women are said to be fickle, but are they more so than men? A man's ideal is as variable as the wind. What he thinks is his ideal of woman is usually a glorified image of the last girl he happened to admire. The man who has had a decided preference for blondes all his life, finally installs a brown-eyed deity

Portia and Carmen

at his hearthstone. If he has been fond of petite and coquettish damsels, he marries some Diana moulded on large lines and unconcerned as to mice.

A man will ride, row, and swim with one girl and marry another who is afraid of horses, turns pale at the mention of a boat, and who would look forward to an interview with His Satanic Majesty with more ease and confidence than to a dip in the summer sea.

Theoretically, men admire "reasonable women," with the uncommon quality which is called "common sense," but it is the woman of caprice, the sweet, illogical despot of a thousand moods, who is most often and most tenderly loved. Man is by nature a discoverer. It is not beauty which holds him, but rather mystery and charm. To see the one woman through all the changing moods — to discern Portia through Carmen's witchery — is the thing above all others which captivates a man.

Deep in his heart, man cherishes the Dorcas ideal. The old, lingering notions of womanliness are not quite dispelled, but in this, as in

The Dorcas Ideal

other things, nothing sickens a man of his pet theory like seeing it in operation.

It may be a charming sight to behold a girl stirring cheese in the chafing-dish, wearing an air of deep concern when it "bunnies" at the sides and requires still more skill. It may also be attractive to see white fingers weave wonders with fine linen and delicate silks, with pretty eagerness as to shade and stitch.

But in the after-years, when his divinity, redolent of the kitchen, meets him at the door, with hair dishevelled and fingers bandaged, it is subtly different from the chafing-dish days, and the crisp chops, generously black with charcoal, are not as good as her rarebits used to be. The memory of the silk and fine linen also fades somewhat, in the presence of darning which contains hard lumps and patches which immediately come off.

It has become the fashion to speak of woman as the eager hunter, and man as the timid, reluctant prey. The comic papers may have started it, but modern society certainly lends colour to the pretty theory. It is frequently attributed to Mr. Darwin, but he is at

The Key of Happiness

times unjustly blamed by those who do not read his pleasing works.

The complexities in man's personal equation are caused by variants of three emotions; a mutable fondness for women, according to temperament and opportunity, a more uniform feeling toward money, and the universal, devastating desire—the old, old passion for food.

The first variant is but partially under the control of any particular woman, and the less she concerns herself with the second, the better it is for both, but she who stimulates and satisfies the third variant holds in her hands the golden key of happiness. No woman need envy the Sphinx her wisdom if she has learned the uses of silence and never asks a favour of a hungry man.

A woman makes her chief mistake when she judges a man by herself and attributes to him indirection and complexity of motive. When she wishes to attract a particular man, she goes at it indirectly. She makes friends of "his sisters, his cousins, and his aunts," and assumes an interest in his chum. She ignores him at first and thus arouses his curiosity.

The Wise Virgin

Later, she condescends to smile upon him and he is mildly pleased, because he thinks he has been working for that very smile and has finally won it. In this manner he is lured toward the net.

When a girl systematically and effectively feeds a man, she is leading trumps. He insensibly associates her with his comfort and thus she becomes his necessity. When a man seeks a woman's society it is because he has need of her, not because he thinks she has need of him ; and the parlour of the girl who realises it, is the envy of every unattached damsel on the street. If the wise one is an expert with the chafing-dish, she may frequently bag desirable game, while the foolish virgins who have no alcohol in their lamps are hunting eagerly for the trail.

Because she herself works indirectly, she thinks he intends a tender look at another girl for a carom shot, and frequently a far-sighted maiden can see the evidences of a consuming passion for herself in a man's devotion to someone else.

Men are not sufficiently diplomatic to bother with finesse of this kind. Other things being

"Encouragement"

equal, a man goes to see the girl he wants to see. It does not often occur to her that he may not want to see her, may be interested in someone else, or that he may have forgotten all about her.

There is a common feminine delusion to the effect that men need "encouragement" and there is no term which is more misused. A fool may need "encouragement," but the man who wants a girl will go after her, regardless of obstacles. As for him, if he is fed at her house, even irregularly, he may know that she looks with favour upon his suit.

The parents of both, the neighbours, and even the girl herself, usually know that a man is in love before he finds it out. Sometimes he has to be told. He has approached a stage of acute and immediate peril when he recognises what he calls "a platonic friendship."

Young men believe platonic friendship possible ; old men know better — but when one man learns to profit by the experience of another, we may look for mosquitoes at Christmas and holly in June.

There is an exquisite danger attached to

"Platonic Friendship"

friendships of this kind, and is it not danger, rather than variety, which is "the spice of life?" Relieved of the presence of that social pace-maker, the chaperone, the disciples of Plato are wont to take long walks, and further on, they spend whole days in the country with book and wheel.

A book is a mysterious bond of union, and by their taste in books do a man and woman unerringly know each other. Two people who unite in admiration of Browning are apt to admire each other, and those who habitually seek Emerson for new courage may easily find the world more kindly if they face it hand in hand.

A latter-day philosopher has remarked upon the subtle sympathy produced by marked passages. "The method is so easy and so unsuspect. You have only to put faint pencil marks against the tenderest passages in your favourite new poet, and lend the volume to Her, and She has only to leave here and there the dropped violet of a timid, confirmatory initial, for you to know your fate."

A man never has a platonic friendship with a woman it is impossible for him to love.

The High-Priest

Cupid is the high-priest at these rites of reading aloud and discussing everything under the sun. The two become so closely bound that one arrow strikes both, and often the happiest marriages are those whose love has so begun, for when the Great Passion dies, as it sometimes does, sympathy and mutual understanding may yield a generous measure of content.

The present happy era of fiction closes a story abruptly at the altar or else begins it immediately after the ceremony. Thence the enthralled reader is conducted through rapture, doubt, misunderstanding, indifference, complications, recrimination, and estrangement to the logical end in cynicism and the divorce court.

In the books which women write, the hero of the story shoulders the blame, and often has to bear his creator's vituperation in addition to his other troubles. When a man essays this theme in fiction, he shows clearly that it is the woman's fault. When the situation is presented outside of books, the happily married critics distribute condemnation in the same way, it being customary for each partner in a happy marriage to claim the entire credit for the mutual content.

Pursuit and Possession

Over the afternoon tea cups it has been decided with unusual and refreshing accord, that "it is pursuit and not possession with a man." True—but is it less true with women?

When Her Ladyship finally acquires the sealskin coat on which she has long set her heart, does she continue to scan the advertisements? Does she still coddle him who hath all power as to sealskin coats, with tempting dishes and unusual smiles? Not unless she wants something else.

Still, it is woman's tendency to make the best of what she has, and man's to reach out for what he has not. Man spends his life in the effort to realise the ideals which, like will-o'-the-wisps, hover just beyond him. Woman, on the contrary, brings into her life what grace she may, by idealising her reals.

In her secret heart, woman holds her unchanging ideal of her own possible perfection. Sometimes a man suspects this, and loves her all the more for the sweet guardian angel which is thus enthroned. Other men, less fine, consider an ideal a sort of disease — and they are usually a certain specific.

But, after all, men are as women make them.

The Potter's Hand

Cleopatra and Helen of Troy swayed empires and rocked thrones. There is no woman who does not hold within her little hands some man's achievement, some man's future, and his belief in woman and God.

She may fire him with high ambition, exalt him with noble striving, or make him a coward and a thief. She may show him the way to the gold of the world, or blind him with tinsel which he may not keep. It is she who leads him to the door of glory and so thrills him with majestic purpose, that nothing this side Heaven seems beyond his eager reach.

Upon his heart she may write ecstasy or black despair. Through the long night she may ever beckon, whispering courage, and by her magic making victory of defeat. It is for her to say whether his face shall be world-scarred and weary, hiding tragedy behind its piteous lines; whether there shall be light or darkness in his soul. He cannot escape those soft, compelling fingers; she is the arbiter of his destiny—for like clay in the potter's hands, she moulds him as she will.

Concerning Women

Concerning Women

Nagging

IN order to be happy, a woman needs only a good digestion, a satisfactory complexion, and a lover. The first requirement being met, the second is not difficult to obtain, and the third follows as a matter of course.

He was a wise philosopher who first considered crime as disease, for women are naturally sweet-tempered and charming. The shrew and the scold are to be reformed only by a physician, and as for nagging, is it not allopathic scolding in homeopathic doses?

A well woman is usually a happy one, and incidentally, those around her share her content. The irritation produced by fifteen minutes of nagging speaks volumes for the personal influence which might be directed the other way, and the desired result more easily obtained.

The sun around which woman revolves is Love. Her whole life is spent in search of it,

Diversions

consciously or unconsciously. Incidental diversions in the way of "career" and "independence" are usually caused by domestic unhappiness, or, in the case of spinsters, the fear of it.

If all men were lovers, there would be no "new woman" movement, no sociological studies of "Woman in Business," no ponderous analyses of "The Industrial Condition of Women" in weighty journals. Still more than a man, a woman needs a home, though it be but the tiniest room.

Even the self-reliant woman of affairs who battles bravely by day in the commercial arena has her little nook, made dainty by feminine touches, to which she gladly creeps at night. Would it not be sweeter if it were shared by one who would always love her? As truly as she needs her bread and meat, woman needs love, and, did he but know it, man needs it too, though in lesser degree.

Lacking the daily expression of it which is the sweet unction of her hungry soul, she seeks solace in an ideal world of her own making. It is because the verity jars upon her vision that she takes a melancholy view of life.

One of woman's keenest pleasures is sorrow. Her tears are not all pain. She goes to the theatre, not to laugh, but to weep. The clever playwright who closes his last scene with a bitter parting is sure of a large clientage, composed almost wholly of women. Sad books are written by men, with an eye to women readers, and women dearly love to wear the willow in print.

Women are unconscious queens of tragedy. Each one, in thought, plays to a sympathetic but invisible audience. She lifts her daily living to a plane of art, finding in fiction, music, pictures, and the stage continual reminders of her own experience.

Does her husband, distraught with business cares, leave her hurriedly and without the customary morning kiss? Woman, on her way to market, rapidly reviews similar instances in fiction, in which this first forgetting proved to be "the little rift within the lute."

The pictures of distracted ladies, wild as to hair and vision, are sold in photogravure by countless thousands—to women. An attraction on the boards which is rumoured to be "so sad," leads woman to economise in the

Woman and Death

matter of roasts and desserts that she may go and enjoy an afternoon of misery. Girls suffer all their lives long from being taken to mirthful plays, or to vaudeville, which is unmixed delight to a man and intolerably cheerful to a woman.

Woman and Death are close friends in art. Opera is her greatest joy, because a great many people are slaughtered in the course of a single performance, and somebody usually goes raving mad for love. When Melba sings the mad scene from *Lucia*, and that beautiful voice descends by lingering half-notes from madness and nameless longing to love and prayer, the women in the house sob in sheer delight and clutch the hands of their companions in an ecstasy of pain.

In proportion as women enjoy sorrow, men shrink from it. A man cannot bear to be continually reminded of the woman he has loved and lost, while woman's dearest keepsakes are old love letters and the shoes of a little child. If the lover or the child is dead, the treasures are never to be duplicated or replaced, but if the pristine owner of the shoes has grown to stalwart manhood and the

writer of the love letters is a tender and devoted husband, the sorrowful interest is merely mitigated. It is not by any means lost.

"Tears, Idle Tears"

Just why it should be considered sad to marry one's lover and for a child to grow up, can never be understood by men. There are many things in the "eternal womanly" which men understand about as well as a kitten does the binomial theorem, but some mysteries become simple enough when the leading fact is grasped—that woman's song of life is written in a minor key and that she actually enjoys the semblance of sorrow. Still, the average woman wishes to be idealised and strongly objects to being understood.

Woman's tears mean no more than the sparks from an overcharged dynamo; they are simply emotional relief. Married men gradually come to realise it, and this is why a suspicion of tears in his sweetheart's eyes means infinitely more to a lover than a fit of hysterics does to a husband.

We are wont to speak of woman's tenderness, but there is no tenderness like that of a man for the woman he loves when she is tired

"The Eternal Womanly"

or troubled, and the man who has learned simply to love a woman at crucial moments, and to postpone the inevitable idiotic questioning till a more auspicious time, has in his hands the talisman of domestic felicity.

If by any chance the lachrymal glands were to be dried up, woman's life would lose a goodly share of its charm. There is nothing to cry on which compares with a man's shoulder; almost any man will do at a critical moment; but the clavicle of a lover is by far the most desirable. If the flood is copious and a collar or an immaculate shirt-front can be spoiled, the scene acquires new and distinct value. A pillow does very well, lacking the shoulder, for many of the most attractive women in fiction habitually cry into pillows —because they have no lover, or because the brute dislikes tears.

When grief strikes deep, a woman's eyes are dry. Her soul shudders and there is a hand upon her heart whose icy fingers clutch at the inward fibre in a very real physical pain. There are no tears for times like these; the inner depths, bare and quivering, are healed by no such balm as this.

A sudden blow leaves a woman as cold as a marble statue and absolutely dumb as to the thing which lies upon her heart. When the tears begin to flow, it means that resignation and content will surely come. On the contrary, when once or twice in a lifetime a man is moved to tears, there is nothing so terrible and so hopeless as his sobbing grief.

Married and unmarried women waste a great deal of time in feeling sorry for each other. It never occurs to a married woman that a spinster may not care to take the troublous step. An ideal lover in one's heart is less strain upon the imagination than the transfiguration of a man who goes around in his shirt-sleeves and dispenses with his collar at ninety degrees Fahrenheit.

If fiction dealt pleasantly with men who are unmindful of small courtesies, the unknown country beyond the altar would lose some of its fear. If the way of an engaged girl lies past a barber shop,—which very seldom has a curtain, by the way,—and she happens to think that she may some day behold her beloved in the dangerous act of shaving himself, it immediately hardens her heart. One

Other Feminine Eyes

glimpse of one face covered with lather will postpone one wedding-day five weeks. Many a lover has attributed to caprice or coquetry the fault which lies at the door of the "tonsorial parlour."

A woman may be a mystery to a man and to herself, but never to another woman. There is no concealment which is effectual when other feminine eyes are fixed upon one's small and harmless schemes. A glance at a girl's dressing-table is sufficient for the intimate friend—she does not need to ask questions; and indeed, there are few situations in life in which the necessity for direct questions is not a confession of individual weakness.

If fourteen different kinds of creams and emollients are within easy reach, the girl has an admirer who is fond of out-door sports and has not yet declared himself. If the curling iron is kept hot, it is because he has looked approval when her hair was waved. If there is a box of rouge but half concealed, the girl thinks the man is a fatuous idiot and hourly expects a proposal.

If the various drugs are in the dental line, the man is a cheerful soul with a tendency to

Other Feminine Eyes

be humorous. If she is particular as to small details of scolding locks and eyebrows, he probably wears glasses. If she devotes unusual attention to her nails, the affair has progressed to that interesting stage where he may hold her hand for a few minutes at a time.

If she selects her handkerchief with extreme care,—one with an initial and a faint odour of violet—she expects to give it to him to carry and to forget to ask for it. If he makes an extra call in order to return it, it indicates a lesser degree of interest than if he says nothing about it. The forgotten handkerchief is an important straw with a girl when love's capricious wind blows her way.

It is not entirely without reason that womankind in general blames "the other woman" for defection of any kind. Short-sighted woman thinks it a mighty tribute to her own charm to secure the passing interest of another's rightful property. It does not seem to occur to her that someone else will lure him away from her with even more ease. Each successive luring makes defection simpler for a man. Practice tends towards

"Not Things, but Men"

perfection in most things ; perhaps it is the single exception, love, which proves the rule.

Three delusions among women are widespread and painful. Marriage is currently supposed to reform a man, a rejected lover is heartbroken for life, and, if "the other woman" were only out of the way, he would come back. Love sometimes reforms a man, but marriage does not. The rejected lover suffers for a brief period, — feminine philosophers variously estimate it, but a week is a generous average,—and he who will not come in spite of "the other woman" is not worth having at all.

Emerson says : "The things which are really for thee gravitate to thee." One is tempted to add the World's Congress motto —"Not things, but men."

There is no virtue in women which men cultivate so assiduously as forgiveness. They make one think that it is very pretty and charming to forgive. It is not hygienic, however, for the woman who forgives easily has a great deal of it to do. When pardon is to be had for the asking, there are frequent causes for its giving. This, of course, applies to the interesting period before marriage.

Post-nuptial sins are atoned for with gifts; not more than once in a whole marriage with the simple, manly words, "Forgive me, dear, I was wrong." It injures a man's conceit vitally to admit he has made a mistake. This is gracious and knightly in the lover, but a married man, the head of a family, must be careful to maintain his position.

Post-Nuptial Sins

Cases of reformation by marriage are few and far between, and men more often die of wounded conceit than broken hearts. "Men have died and worms have eaten them, but not for love," save on the stage and in the stories women cry over.

"The other woman" is the chief bugbear of life. On desert islands and in a very few delightful books, her baneful presence is not. The girl a man loves with all his heart can see a long line of ghostly ancestors, and requires no opera-glass to discern through the mists of the future a procession of possible posterity. It is for this reason that men's ears are tried with the eternal, unchanging: "Am I the only woman you ever loved?" and "Will you always love me?"

The woman who finally acquires legal

"The Other Woman"

possession of a man is haunted by the shadowy predecessors. If he is unwary enough to let her know another girl has refused him, she develops a violent hatred for this inoffensive maiden. Is it because the cruel creature has given pain to her lord? His gods are not her gods — if he has adored another woman.

These two are mutually "other women," and the second one has the best of it, for there is no thorn in feminine flesh like the rejected lover who finds consolation elsewhere. It may be exceedingly pleasant to be a man's first love, but she is wise beyond books who chooses to be his last, and it is foolish to spend mental effort upon old flames, rather than in watching for new ones, for Cæsar himself is not more utterly dead than a man's dead love.

Women are commonly supposed to worry about their age, but Father Time is a trouble to men also. The girl of twenty thinks it absurd for women to be concerned about the matter, but the hour eventually comes when she regards the subject with reverence akin to awe. There is only one terror in it — the dreadful nines.

Scylla and Charybdis

"Twenty-nine!" Might she not as well be thirty? There is little choice between Scylla and Charybdis. Twenty-nine is the hour of reckoning for every woman, married, engaged, or unattached.

The married woman felicitates herself greatly, unless a tall daughter of nine or ten walks abroad at her side. The engaged girl is safe — she rejoices in the last hours of her lingering girlhood and hems table linen with more resignation. The unattached girl has a strange interest in creams and hair tonics, and usually betakes herself to the cloister of the university for special courses, since azure hosiery does not detract from woman's charm in the eyes of the faculty.

Men do not often know their ages accurately till after thirty. The gladsome heyday of youth takes no note of the annual milestones. But after thirty, ah me! "Yes," a man will say sometimes, "I am thirty-one, but the fellows tell me I don't look a day over twenty-nine." Scylla and Charybdis again!

Still, age is not a matter of birthdays, but of the heart. Some women are mature cynics at twenty, while a grey-haired matron

Perennial Youth

of fifty seems to have found the secret of perennial youth. There is little to choose, as regards beauty and charm, between the young, unformed girl, whose soft eyes look with longing into the unyielding future which gives her no hint of its purposes, and the mature woman, well-groomed, self-reliant to her finger-tips, who has drunk deeply of life's cup and found it sweet. A woman is never old until the little finger of her glove is allowed to project beyond the finger itself and she orders her new photographs from an old plate in preference to sitting again.

In all the seven ages of man, there is someone whom she may attract. If she is twenty-five, the boy who has just attained long trousers will not buy her striped sticks of peppermint and ask shyly if he may carry her books. She is not apt to wear fraternity pins and decorate her rooms in college colours, unless her lover still holds his alma mater in fond remembrance. But there are others, always the others — and is it less sweet to inspire the love which lasts than the tender verses of a Sophomore? Her field of action is not sensibly limited, for at twenty

Three Weapons

men love woman, at thirty a woman, and at forty, women.

Woman has three weapons — flattery, food, and flirtation, and only the last of these is ever denied her by Time. With the first she appeals to man's conceit, with the second to his heart, which is suspected to lie at the end of the œsophagus, rather than over among lungs and ribs, and with the third to his natural rivalry of his fellows. But the pleasures of the chase grow beautifully less when age brings rheumatism and kindred ills.

Besides, may she not always be a chaperone? When a political orator refers effectively to "the cancer which is eating at the heart of the body politic," someway, it always makes a girl think of a chaperone. She goes, ostensibly, to lend a decorous air to whatever proceedings may be in view. She is to keep the man from making love to the girl. Whispers and tender hand clasps are occasionally possible, however, for, tell it not in Gath! the chaperone was once young herself and at times looks the other way.

The Chaperone

That is, unless she is the girl's mother. Trust a parent for keeping two eyes and a pair of glasses on a girl! Trust the non-matchmaking mother for four new eyes under her back hair and a double row of ears arranged laterally along her anxious spine! And yet, if the estimable lady had not been married herself, it is altogether likely that the girl would never have thought of it.

The reason usually given for chaperonage is that it gives the girl a chance to become acquainted with the man. Of course, in the presence of a chaperone, a man says and does exactly the same things he would if he were alone with the maiden of his choice. He does not mind making love to a girl in her mother's presence. He does not even care to be alone with her when he proposes to her. He would like to have some chaperone read his letters — he always writes with this intention. At any time during the latter part of the month it fills him with delight to see the chaperone order a lobster after they have all had oysters.

Nonsense! Why do not the leaders of society say, frankly: "This chaperone business

Behold his House!

is just a little game. Our husbands are either at the club or soundly asleep at home. It is not nice to go around alone, and it is pathetic to go in pairs, with no man. We will go with our daughters and their young friends, for they have cavaliers enough and to spare. Let us get out and see the world, lest we die of ennui and neglect!" It is the chaperone who really goes with the young man. She takes the girl along to escape gossip.

It is strange, when it is woman's avowed object to make man happy, that she insists upon doing it in her own way, rather than in his. He likes the rich, warm colours; the deep reds and dark greens. Behold his house!

Renaissance curtains obscure the landscape with delicate tracery, and he realises what it might mean to wear a veil. Soft tones of rose and Nile green appear in his drawing-room. Chippendale chairs, upon which he fears to sit, invite the jaded soul to whatever repose it can get. See the sofa cushions, which he has learned by bitter experience never to touch! Does he rouse a quiescent Nemesis by laying his weary head upon that elaborate embroidery? Not unless his memory is poor.

Home Comforts

Take careful note of the bric-à-brac upon his library table. See the few square inches of blotting paper on a cylinder which he can roll over his letter — the three stamps stuck together more closely than brothers, generously set aside for his use. Does he find comfort here? Not very much of it.

See the dainty dinner which is set before the hungry man. A cup of rarest china holds four ounces of clear broth. A stick of bread or two crackers are allotted to him. Then he may have two croquettes, or one small chop, when his soul is athirst for rare roast beef and steak an inch thick. Then a nice salad, made of three lettuce leaves and a suspicion of oil, another cracker and a cubic inch of cheese, an ounce of coffee in a miniature cup, and behold, the man is fed!

Why should he go to his club, call loudly for flesh-pots, sink into a chair he is not afraid of breaking, and forget his trouble in the evening paper, while his wife is at home, alone, or having a Roman holiday as a chaperone?

It is a simple thing to acquire a lover, but it is a fine art to keep him. Clubs were origin-

The Heart of a Woman

ally intended for the homeless, as distinguished from the unmarried. The rare woman who rests and soothes a man when he is tired has no rival in the club. Misunderstanding, sorrowful, yearning for what she has lost, woman contemplates the wreck of her girlish dream.

There are three things man is destined never to solve—perpetual motion, the square of the circle, and the heart of a woman. Yet he may go a little way into the labyrinth with the thread of love, which his Ariadne will gladly give him at the door.

The dim chambers are fragrant with precious things, for through the winding passages Memory has strewn rue and lavender, love and longing; sweet spikenard and instinctive belief. Some day, when the heart aches, she will brew content from these.

There are barriers which he may not pass, secret treasures that he may not see, dreams that he may not guess. There are dark corners where there has been torture, of which he will never know. There are shadows and ghostly shapes which Penelope has hidden with the fairest fabrics of her loom. There

The Heart of a Woman

are doors, tightly locked, which he has no key to open ; rooms which have contained costly vessels, empty and deep with dust.

There is no other step than his, for he walks there alone ; sometimes to the music of dead days and sometimes to the laughter of a little child. The petals of crushed roses rustle at his feet — his roses—in the inmost places of her heart. And beyond, of spotless marble, with the infinite calm of mountains and perpetual snow, is something which he seldom comprehends—her love of her own whiteness.

It is a wondrous thing. For it is so small he could hold it in the hollow of his hand, yet it is great enough to shelter him forever. All the world may not break it if his love is steadfast and unchanging, and loving him, it becomes deep enough to love and pity all the world.

It is a tender thing. So often is it wounded that it cannot see another suffer, and its own pain is easier far to bear. It makes a shield of its very tenderness, gladly receiving the stabs that were meant for him, forgiving always, and forgetting when it may.

The Solace

Yet, after all, it is a simple thing. For in times of deepest doubt and trouble, it requires for its solace only the tender look, the whispered word which brings new courage, and the old-time grace of the lover's way.

The Philosophy of Love

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LOVE LETTERS
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LOVE
POETRY
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The Philosophy of Love

The Prevailing Theme

A MODERN novelist has greatly lamented because the prevailing theme of fiction is love. Every story is a love story, every romance finds its inspiration in the heart, and even the musty tomes of history are beset by the little blind god.

One or two men have dared to write books from which women have been excluded as rigorously as from the Chinese stage, but the world of readers has not loudly clamoured for more of the same sort. A story of adventure loses none of its interest if there is some fair damsel to be rescued from various thrilling situations.

The realists contend that a single isolated fact should not be dwelt upon to the exclusion of all other interests, that love plays but a small part in the life of the average man or woman, and that it is unreasonable to expand it to the uttermost limits of art.

The Root of all Good

Strangely enough, the realists are all men. If a woman ventures to write a book which may fitly be classed under the head of realism, the critics charitably unite upon insanity as the cause of it and lament the lost womanliness of a decadent generation.

If realism were actually real, we should have no time for books and pictures. Our days and nights would be spent in reclaiming the people in the slums. There would be a visible increase in the church fair—where we spend more than we can afford for things we do not want, in order to please people whom we do not like, and to help heathen who are happier than we are.

The love of money is said to be the root of all evil, but love itself is the root of all good, for it is the very foundation of the social structure. The universal race for the elusive shilling, which is commonly considered selfish, is based upon love.

Money will buy fine houses, but who would wish to live in a mansion alone ! Fast horses, yachts, private cars, and the feasts of Lucullus, are not to be enjoyed in solitude ; they must be shared. Buying jewels and costly raiment

Love

is the purest philanthropy, for it gives pleasure to others. Sapphires and real lace depreciate rapidly in the cloister or the desert.

The envy which luxury sometimes creates is also altruistic in character, for in its last analysis, it is the wish to give pleasure to others, in the same degree, as the envied fortunately may. Nothing is happiness which is not shared by at least one other, and nothing is truly sorrow unless it is borne absolutely alone.

Love! The delight and the torment of the world! The despair of philosophers and sages, the rapture of poets, the confusion of cynics, and the warrior's defeat!

Love! The bread and the wine of life, the hunger and the thirst, the hurt and the healing, the only wound which is cured by another! The guest who comes like a thief in the night! The eternal question which is its own answer, the thing which has no beginning and no end!

The very blindness of it is divine, for it sees no imperfections, takes no reck of faults, and concerns itself only with the hidden beauty of the soul.

Love

It is unselfishness—yet it tolerates no rival and demands all for itself. It is belief—and yet it doubts. It is hope and it is also misgiving. It is trust and distrust, the strongest temptation and the power to withstand it; woman's need and man's dream. It is his enemy and his best friend, her weakness and her strength; the roses and the thorns.

Woman's love affairs begin in her infancy, with some childish play at sweethearts, and a cavalier in dresses for her hero. It may be a matter of affinity in later years, or, as the more prosaic Buckle suggests, dependent upon the price of corn, but at first it is certainly a question of propinquity.

Through the kindergarten and the multiplication table, the pretty game goes on. Before she is thirteen, she decides to marry, and selects an awkward boy a little older for the happy man. She cherishes him in her secret heart, and it does not matter in the least if she does not know him well enough to speak to him, for the good fairies who preside over earthly destinies will undoubtedly lead The Prince to become formally acquainted at the proper time.

The Self-Conscious Period

Later, the self-conscious period approaches and Mademoiselle becomes solicitous as to ribbons and personal adornment. She pleads earnestly for long gowns, and the first one is never satisfying unless it drags. If she can do her hair in a twist "just like mamma's," and see the adored one pass the house, while she sits at the window with sewing or book, she feels actually "grown up."

When she begins to read novels, her schoolmates, for the time being, are cast aside, because none of them are in the least like the lovers who stalk through the highly-coloured pages of the books she likes best. The hero is usually "tall and dark, with a melancholy cast of countenance," and there are fascinating hints of some secret sorrow. The watchful maternal parent is apt to confiscate these interesting volumes, but there are always school desks and safe places in the neighbourhood of pillows, and a candle does not throw its beams too far.

The books in which the love scenes are most violent possess unfading charm. A hero who says "darling" every time he opens his finely-chiselled mouth is very near

Age and Colour

perfection. That fondness lasts well into the after-years, for "darling" is, above all others, the favourite term of endearment with a woman.

Were it not for the stern parents and wholesome laws as to age, girls might more often marry their first loves. It is difficult to conjecture what the state of civilisation might be, if it were common for people to marry their first loves, regardless of "age, colour, or previous condition of servitude."

Age and colour are all-important factors with Mademoiselle. She could not possibly love a boy three weeks younger than herself, and if her eyes are blue and her hair light, no blondes need apply.

There is a curious delusion, fostered by phrenologists and other amiable students of "temperament," to the effect that a brunette must infallibly fall in love with a blonde and vice versa. What dire misfortune may result if this rule is not followed can be only surmised, for the phrenologists do not know. Still, the majority of men are dark and it is said they do not marry as readily as of yore—is this the secret of the widespread havoc made by peroxide of hydrogen?

The Pastime and the Dream

The lurid fiction fever soon runs its course with Mademoiselle, if she is let alone, and she turns her attention once more to her schoolmates. She has at least a dozen serious attacks before she is twenty, and at that ripe age, is often a little *blasé*.

But the day soon comes when the pretty play is over and the soft eyes widen with fear. She passes the dividing line between childhood and womanhood when she first realises that her pastime and her dream have forged chains around her inmost soul. This, then, is what life holds for her ; it is ecstasy or torture, and for this very thing she was made.

Some man exists whom she will follow to the end of the world, right royally if she may, but on her knees if she must. The burning sands of the desert will be as soft grass if he walks beside her, his voice will make her forget her thirst, and his touch upon her arm will change her weariness into peace.

When he beckons she must answer. When he says "come," she must not stay. She must be all things to him — friend, comrade, sweetheart, wife. When the infinite mean-

The Strongest Passion

ing of her dream slowly dawns upon her, is it strange that she trembles and grows pale?

Soon or late it comes to all. Sometimes there is terror at the sudden meeting and Love often comes in the guise of a friend. But always, it brings joy which is sorrow, and pain which is happiness — gladness which is never content.

A woman wants a man to love her in the way she loves him; a man wants a woman to love him in the way he loves her, and because the thing is impossible, neither is satisfied.

Man's emotion is far stronger than woman's. His feeling, when it is deep, is a force which a woman may but dimly understand. The strongest passion of a man's life is his love for his sweetheart; woman's greatest love is lavished upon her child.

"One is the lover and one is the loved." Sometimes the positions are reversed, to the misery of all concerned, but normally, man is the lover. He wins love by pleading for it, and there is no way by which a woman may more surely lose it, for while woman's pity is closely akin to Love, man's pity is a poor relation who wears Love's cast-off clothes.

Gift and Giver

There are two other ways in which a woman loses her lover. One is by marrying him and the other by retaining him as her friend. If she can keep him as her friend, she never believes in his love, and husbands and lovers are often two very different possessions.

A man's heart is an office desk, wherein tender episodes are pigeon-holed for future reference. If he is too busy to look them over, they are carried off later in Father Time's junk-wagon, like other and more profane history.

All the isolated loves of a woman's life are woven into a single continuous fabric. Love itself is the thing she needs and the man who offers it seldom matters much. Man loves and worships woman, but woman loves love. Were it not so, there would be no actor's photograph upon the matinée girl's dressing-table, and no bit of tender verse would be fastened to her cushion with a hat pin, while she herself was fancy free.

All her life long she confuses the gift with the giver, and loving with the pride of being loved, because her love is responsive rather than original.

The Forgotten Harp

She demands that the lover's devotion shall continue after marriage ; that every look shall be tender and every word adoring. Failing this, she knows that love is dead. She is inevitably disappointed in marriage, because she is no longer his fear, intoxication, and pain, but rather his comrade and friend. The vibrant strings, struck from silence and dreams to a sounding chord, are trembling still—whispering lingering music to him who has forgotten the harp.

When a woman once tells a man she loves him, he regards it as some chemical process which has taken place in her heart and he never considers the possibility of change. He is little concerned as to its expression, for he knows it is there. On the contrary, it is only by expression that a woman ever feels certain of a man's love.

Doubt is the essential and constant quality of her nature, when once she loves. She continually demands new proof and new devotion, consoling herself sometimes with the thought that three days ago he said he loved her and there has been no discord since.

As for him, if his comfort is assured, he

The Lover's Devotion

never thinks to question her, for men are as blind as Love. If she seems glad to see him and is not distinctly unpleasant, she may even be a little preoccupied without arousing suspicion. A man likes to feel that he is loved and a woman likes to be told.

The use of any faculty exhausts it. The ear, deafened by a cannon, is incapable for the moment of hearing the human voice. The eyes, momentarily blinded by the full glare of the sun, miss the delicate shades of violet and sapphire in the smoke from a wood fire. We soon become accustomed to condiments and perfume, and the same law applies to sentiment and emotion.

Thus it seems to women that men love spasmodically—that the lover's devotion is a series of unrelated acts based upon momentary impulse, rather than a steady purpose. They forget that the heart may need more rest than the interval between beats.

If a man and woman who truly loved each other were cast away upon a desert island, he would tire of her long before she wearied of him. The sequence of attraction and repulsion, the ultimate balance of positive and

Attraction and Repulsion

negative, are familiar electrical phenomena. Is it unreasonable to suppose that the supreme form of attraction is governed by the same law?

Strong attractions frequently begin with strong repulsions, sometimes mutual, but more often on the part of the attracting force. A man seldom develops a violent and inexplicable hatred for a woman and later finds that it has unaccountably changed to love.

Yet a woman often marries a man she has sincerely hated, and the explanation is simple enough, perhaps, for a woman never hates a man unless he is in some sense her master. Love and hate are kindred passions with a woman and the depth of the one is the possible measure of the other.

She is wise who fully understands her weapon of coquetry. She will send her lover from her at the moment his love is strongest, and he will often seek her in vain. She will be parsimonious with her letters and caresses and thus keep her attraction at its height. If he is forever unsatisfied, he will always be her lover, for satiety must precede repulsion.

No woman need fear the effect of absence

The Old, Old Law

upon the man who honestly loves her. The needle of the compass, regardless of intervening seas, points forever toward the north. Pitiful indeed is she who fails to be a magnet and blindly becomes a chain.

The age has brought with it woman's desire for equality, at least in the matter of love. She wishes to be as free to seek a man as he is to seek her—to love him as freely and frankly as he does her. Why should she withhold her lips after her heart has surrendered? Why should she keep the pretence of coyness long after she has been won?

Far beneath the tinsel of our restless age lies the old, old law, and she who scorns it does so at the peril of all she holds most dear. Legislation may at times be disobeyed, but never law, for the breaking brings swift punishment of its own.

Too often a generous-hearted woman makes the mistake of full revelation. She wishes him to understand her every deed, her every thought. Nothing is left to his imagination—the innermost corners of her heart are laid bare. Given the woman and the circumstances, he would infallibly know her action.

A Carmen at Heart

This is why the husbands of the "practical," the "methodical," and the "reasonable" women may be tender and devoted, but are never lovers after marriage.

If Alexander had been a woman, he would not have sighed for more worlds to conquer—woman asks but one. If his world had been a clever woman he would have had no time for alien planets, because a man will never lose his interest in a woman while his conquest is incomplete.

The woman who is most tenderly loved and whose husband is still her lover, carefully conceals from him the fact that she is fully won. There is always something he has yet to gain.

After ten years of marriage, if the old relation remains the same, it is because she is a Carmen at heart. She is alluring, tempting, cajoling and scorning in the same breath ; at once tender and commanding, inspiring both love and fear, baffling and eluding even while she is leading him on.

She gives him veiled hints of her real personality, but he never penetrates her mask. Could he see for an instant into the secret

depths of her soul, he would understand that her concealment and her coquetry, her mystery and her charm, are nothing but her love, playing a desperate game against Time and man's nature, for the dear stake of his own.

The Cords of Memory

Dumas draws a fine distinction when he says: "A man may have two passions but never two loves: whoever has loved twice has never loved at all." If this is true, the dividing line is so exceedingly fine that it is beyond woman's understanding, and it may be surmised that even man does not fully realise it until he is old and grey.

Yet somewhere, in every man's heart, is hidden a woman's face. To that inner chamber no other image ever finds its way. The cords of memory which hold it are strong as steel and as tender as the heart-fibre of which they are made.

There is no time in his life when those eyes would not thrill him and those lips make him tremble—no hour when the sound of that voice would not summon him like a trumpet-call.

No loyalty or allegiance is powerful enough to smother it within his own heart, in spite of

The Cords of Memory

the conditions to which he may outwardly conform. Other passions may temporarily hide it even from his own sight, yet in reality it is supreme, from the day of its birth to the door of his grave.

He may be happily married, as the world counts happiness, and She may be dead—but never forgotten. No real love or hate is wrought upon by Lethe. The thousand dreams of her will send his blood in passionate flow and the thousand memories of her whiten his face with pain. Friendship is intermittent and passion forgets, but man's single love is eternal.

Because woman's love is responsive, it never dies. Her love of love is everlasting. Some threads in the fabric she has woven are like shining silver; others are sombre, broken, and stained with tears. When a man has once taught a woman to believe his love is true, she is already, though unconsciously, won.

All the beauty in woman's life is forever associated with her love. Violets bring the memory of dead days, when the boy-lover brought them to her in fragrant heaps. Some

Some Lost Song

women say man's love is selfish, but there is no one among them who has ever been loved by a boy.

Broken, hesitant chords set some lost song to singing in her heart. The break in her lover's voice is like another, long ago. Summer days and summer fields, silver streams, and clouds of apple blossoms set against the turquoise sky, bring back the Mays of childhood and all the childish dreams.

This is another thing a man cannot understand—that every little tenderness of his wakes the memory of all past tenderness, and for that very reason is often doubly sweet. This is the explanation of sudden sadness, of the swift succession of moods, and of lips, shut on sobs, that sometimes quiver beneath his own.

Woman keeps alive the old ideals. Were it not for her eager efforts, chivalry would have died long ago. King Arthur's Court is said to be a myth, and Lancelot and Guenevere were only dreams, but the knightly spirit still lives in man's love for woman.

The Lady of the Court was wont to send her knight into danger at her sweet, capricious

The Lady of the Court

will. Her glove upon his helmet, her scarf upon his arm, her colours on his shield—were they worth the risk of horse and spear? Yet the little that she gave him, made him invincible in the field.

To-day there is a subtle change. She is loved as dearly as was Guenevere, but she gives him neither scarf nor glove. Her love in his heart is truly his shield and his colours are the white of her soul.

He needs no gage but her belief, and having that, it is a trust only a coward will betray. The battle is still to the strong, but just as surely her knight comes back with his shield untarnished, his colours unstained, and his heart aglow with love of her who gave him courage.

The centuries have brought new striving, which the Lady of the Court could never know. The daughter of to-day endeavours to be worthy of the knightly worship—to be royal in her heart and queenly in her giving; to be the exquisitely womanly woman he sees behind her faulty clay, so that if the veil of illusion he has woven around her should ever fall away, the reality might be even fairer than his dream.

By Grace of Magic

Through the sombre pages of history the knights and ladies move, as though woven in the magic web of the Lady of Shalott. Tournament and shield and spear, the Round Table and Camelot, have taken on the mystery of fables and dreams.

Yet, by the grace of magic, the sweet old story lives to-day, unforgotten, because of its single motive. Elaine still dies for love of Lancelot, Isolde urges Tristram to new proofs of devotion, and Guenevere, the beautiful, still shares King Arthur's throne. For chivalry is not dead — it only sleeps — and the nobleness and valour of that far-off time are ever at the service of her who has found her knight.

The Lost Art of Courtship

The Lost Art of Courtship

Liberty of Choice

CIVILISATION is so acutely developed at present that the old meaning of courtship is completely lost. None of the phenomena which precede a proposal would be deemed singular or out of place in a platonic friendship. This state of affairs gives a man every advantage and all possible liberty of choice.

Our grandparents are scandalised at modern methods. "Girls never did so," in the distant years when those dear people were young. If a young man called on grandmother once a week, and she approved of him and his prospects, she began on her household linen, without waiting for the momentous question.

Judging by the fiction of the period and by the delightful tales of old New England, which read like fairy stories to this generation, the courtships of those days were too leisurely

Faithful Maidens

to be very interesting. Ten-year engagements did not seem to be unusual, and it was not considered a social mistake if a man suddenly disappeared for four or five years, without the formality of mentioning his destination to the young woman who expected to marry him.

We have all read of the faithful maidens who kept on weaving stores of fine linen and making regular pilgrimages for the letter which did not come. Years afterward, when the man finally appeared, it was all right, and the wedding went on just the same, even though in the meantime the recreant knight had married and been bereaved.

Two or three homeless children were sometimes brought cheerfully into the story, and assisted materially in the continuation of the interrupted courtship. The tears which the modern spinster sheds over such a tale are not at the pathos of the situation, but because it is possible, even in fiction, for a woman to be so destitute of spirit.

"In dem days," as Uncle Remus would say, any attention whatever meant business. Small courtesies which are without signifi-

Without Saying a Word

cance now were fraught with momentous import then. In this year of grace, among all races except our own, there are ways in which a man may definitely commit himself without saying a word.

A flower or a serenade is almost equivalent to a proposal in sunny Spain. A "walking-out" period of six months is much in vogue in other parts of Europe, but the daughter of the Anglo-Saxon has no such guide to a man's intentions.

Among certain savage tribes, if a man is in love with a girl and wishes to marry her, he drags her around his tent by the hair or administers a severe beating. It may be surmised that these attentions are not altogether pleasant, but she has the advantage of knowing what the man means.

Flowers are a pretty courtesy and nothing more. The kindly thought which prompts them may be as transient as their bloom. Three or four men serenade girls on summer nights because they love to hear themselves sing. Books, and music, and sweets, which convention decrees are the only proper gifts for the unattached, may be sent to any girl,

Furniture

without affecting her indifference to furniture advertisements and January sales of linen.

If there is any actual courtship at the present time, the girl does just as much of it as the man. Her dainty remembrances at holiday time have little more meaning than the trifles a man bestows upon her, though the gift latitude accorded her is much wider in scope.

When a girl gives a man furniture, she usually intends to marry him, but often merely succeeds in making things interesting for the girl who does it in spite of her. The newly-married woman attends to the personal belongings of her happy possessor with the celerity which is taught in classes for "First Aid to the Injured."

One by one, the cherished souvenirs of his bachelor days disappear. Pictures painted by rival fair ones go to adorn the servant's room, through gradual retirement backward. Rare china is mysteriously broken. Sofa cushions never "harmonise with the tone of the room," and the covers have to be changed. It takes time, but usually by the first anniversary of a man's marriage, his penates have been nobly

Furniture

weeded out, and the things he has left are of his wife's choosing, generously purchased with his own money.

Woe to the girl who gives a man a scarf-pin! When the bride returns the initial call, that scarf-pin adds conspicuously to her adornment. The calm appropriation makes the giver grind her teeth — and the bride knows it.

In the man's presence, the keeper of his heart and conscience will say, sweetly: "Oh, my dear, such a dreadful thing has happened! That exquisitely embroidered scarf you made for Tom's chiffonier is utterly ruined! The colours ran the first time it was washed. You have no idea how I feel about it — it was such a beautiful thing!"

The wretched donor of the scarf attempts consolation by saying that it does n't matter. It never was intended for Tom, but as every stitch in it was taken while he was with her, he insisted that he must have it as a souvenir of that happy summer. She adds that it was carefully washed before it was given to him, that she has never known that kind of silk to fade, and that something must have been done to it to make the colours run.

A pitched Battle

The short-sighted man at this juncture felicitates himself because the two are getting on so well together. He never realises that a pitched battle has occurred under his very nose, and that the honours are about even.

If Tom possesses a particularly unfortunate flash-light photograph of the girl, the bride joyfully frames it and puts it on the mantel where all may see. If the original of the caricature remonstrates, the happy wife sweetly temporises and insists that it remain, because "Tom is so fond of it," and says, "it looks just like her."

Devious indeed are the paths of woman. She far excels the "Heathen Chinee" in his famous specialty of "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain."

Courtship is a game that a girl has to play without knowing the trump. The only way she ever succeeds at it is by playing to an imaginary trump of her own, which may be either open, disarming friendliness, or simple indifference.

When a man finds the way to a woman's heart a boulevard, he has taken the wrong road. When his path is easy and his burden

The Only One They Know

light, it is time for him to doubt. When his progress seems like making a new way to the Klondike, he needs only to keep his courage and go on.

For, after all, it is woman who decides. A clever girl may usually marry any man she sees fit to honour with the responsibility of her bills. The ardent lover counts for considerably less than he is wont to suppose.

There is a good old scheme which the world of lovers has unanimously adopted, in order to find out where they stand. It is so simple as to make one weep, but it is the only one they know. This consists of an intentional absence, judiciously timed.

Suppose a man has been spending three or four evenings a week with the same girl, for a period of two or three months. Flowers, books, and chocolates have occasionally appeared, as well as invitations to the theatre. The man has been fed out of the chafing-dish, and also with accidental cake, for men are as fond of sugar as women, though they are ashamed to admit it.

Suddenly, without warning, the man misses an evening, then another, then another. Two

"Climbing a Tree"

weeks go by, and still no man. The neighbours and the family begin to ask questions of a personal nature.

It is at this stage that the immature and childish woman will write the man a note, expressing regret for his long absence, and trusting that nothing may interfere with their "pleasant friendship." Sometimes the note brings the man back immediately and sometimes it does n't. He very seldom condescends to make an explanation. If he does, it is merely a casual allusion to "business." This is the only excuse even a bright man can think of.

This act is technically known among girls as "climbing a tree." When a man does it, he wants a girl to bring a ladder and a lunch and plead with him to come down and be happy, but doing as he wishes is no way to attract a man up a tree.

Men are as impervious to tears and pleadings as a good mackintosh to mist, but at the touch of indifference, they melt like wax. So when her quondam lover attempts metaphorical athletics, the wise girl smiles and withdraws into her shell.

She takes care that he shall not see her

Pride and Pride

unless he comes to her. She draws the shades the moment the lamps are lighted. If he happens to pass the house in the evening, he may think she is out, or that she has company—it is all the same to her. She arranges various evenings with girl friends and gets books from the library. This is known as "provisioning the citadel for a siege."

It is a contest between pride and pride which occurs in every courtship, and the girl usually wins. True lovers are as certain to return as Bo-Peep's flock or a systematically deported cat. Shame-faced, but surely, the man comes back.

Various laboratory note-books yield the same result. A single entry indicates the general trend of the affair.

MAN *calls on* GIRL *after five weeks of unexplained absence. She asks no questions, but keeps the conversation impersonal, even after he shows symptoms of wishing to change its character.*

MAN. (*Finally.*) "I have n't seen you for an awfully long time."

GIRL. "Have n't you? Now that I think of it, it has been some time."

Pride and Pride

MAN. "How long has it been, I wonder?"

GIRL. "I have n't the least idea. Ten days or two weeks, I guess."

MAN. (*Hastily.*) "Oh no, it 's been much longer than that. Let 's see, it 's "—(*makes great effort with memory*)—"why, it 's five weeks! Five weeks and three days! Don't you remember?"

GIRL. "I had n't thought of it. It does n't seem that long. How time does fly, does n't it!" (*Long silence.*)

MAN. "I 've been awfully busy. I wanted to come over, but I just could n't."

GIRL. "I 've been very busy, too." (*Voluminous detail of her affairs follows, entirely pleasant in character.*)

MAN. (*Tenderly.*) "Were you so busy you did n't miss me?"

GIRL. "Why, I can't say I missed you, exactly, but I always thought of you pleasantly."

MAN. "Did you think of me often?"

GIRL. (*Laughing.*) "I did n't keep any record of it. Do you want me to cut a notch in the handle of my parasol every time I think of you? If all my friends were so exacting,

His Short Suit

I 'd have time for nothing else. I 'd need a new one every week and the house would be full of shavings. All my fingers would be cut, too."

MAN. (*Unconsciously showing his hand.*) "I thought you 'd write me a note."

GIRL. (*Leading his short suit.*) "You could have waited on your front steps till the garbage man took you away, and I would n't have written you any note."

MAN. (*With evident sincerity.*) "That 's no dream ! I could do just that !" (*Proposal follows in due course,* MAN *making full and complete confession.*)

If he is foolish enough to complicate his game with another girl, he loses much more than he gains, for he lowers the whole affair to the level of a flirtation, and destroys any belief the girl may have had in him. He also forces her to do the same thing, in self-defence. Flirtation is the only game in which it is advisable and popular to trump one's partner's ace.

He who would win a woman must challenge her admiration, prove himself worthy of her regard, appeal to her sympathy — and

A State Secret

then wound her. She is never wholly his until she realises that he has the power to make her miserable as well as to make her happy, and that love is an infinite capacity for suffering.

A man who does it consciously is apt to overdo it, out of sheer enthusiasm, and if a girl suspects that it is done intentionally, the hurt loses its sting and changes her love to bitterness. A succession of attempts is also useless, for a man never hurts a woman twice in exactly the same way. When he has run the range of possible stabs, she is out of his reach — unless she is his wife.

The intentional absence scheme is too transparent to succeed, and temporary devotion to another girl is definite damage to his cause, for it indicates fickleness and instability. There is only one way by which a man may discover his true position without asking any questions, and that is — a state secret. Now and then a man strikes it by accident, but nobody ever tells — even brothers or platonic friends.

Some men select a wife as they would a horse, paying due attention to appearance, gait,

The "Woman's Column"

disposition, age, teeth, and grooming. High spirits and a little wildness are rather desirable than otherwise, if both are young. Men who have had many horses or many wives and have grown old with both, have a slight inclination toward sedate ways and domestic traits.

Modern society makes it fully as easy to choose the one as the other. In communities where the chaperone idea is at its prosperous zenith, a man may see a girl under nearly all circumstances. The men who conduct the "Woman's Column" in many pleasing journals are still writing of the effect it has on a man to catch a girl in curl papers of a morning, though curl papers have been obsolete for many and many a moon.

Cycling, golf, and kindred out-door amusements have been the death of careless morning attire. Uncorseted woman is unhappy woman, and the girl of whom the versatile journalist writes died long ago. Perhaps it is because a newspaper man can write anything at four minutes' notice and do it well, that the press fairly reeks with "advice to women."

The question, propounded in a newspaper column, "What Kind of a Girl Does a Man

Neglected By His Kind

Like Best," will bring out a voluminous symposium which adds materially to the gaiety of the nation. It would be only fair to have this sort of thing temporarily reversed—to tell men how to make home happy for their wives and how to keep a woman's love, after it has once been given.

Some clever newspaper woman might win everlasting laurels for herself if she would contribute to this much neglected branch of human knowledge. How is a man to know that a shirt-front which looks like a railroad map diverts one's mind from his instructive remarks? How is he to know that a cane is a nuisance when he fares forth with a girl? It is true that sisters might possibly attempt this, but the modern sister is heavily overworked at present and it is not kind to suggest an addition to her cares.

There is no advice of any sort given to men except on the single subject of choosing a wife. This is to be found only in the books in the Sabbath-School library, or in occasional columns of the limited number of saffron dailies which illuminate the age. Surely, man has been neglected by his kind!

Indecision

The general masculine attitude indicates widespread belief in the promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive." A man will tell his best friend that he does n't know whether to marry a certain girl. If she hears of his indecision there is trouble ahead, if he finally decides in the affirmative, and it is quite possible that he may not marry her.

After the door of a woman's heart has once swung on its silent hinges, a man thinks he can prop it open with a brick and go away and leave it. A storm is apt to displace the brick, however — and there is a heavy spring on the door. Woe to the masculine finger that is in the way !

A man often hesitates between two young women and asks his friends which he shall marry. Custom has permitted the courtship of both and neither has the right to feel aggrieved, because it is exceedingly bad form for a girl to love a man before he has asked her to.

Now and then a third girl is a man's confidante at this trying period. Nothing so bores a person as to be a man's "guide, philosopher and friend" in his perplexities with

The Adamantine Fortress

other girls. To one distinct class of women men tell their troubles and the other class sees that they have plenty to tell. It is better to be in the second category than in the first.

Sooner or later, the confidante explains the whole affair to the subjects of the confidence and strange, new kinds of trouble immediately come to the rash man. It is a common failing to expect another person to keep a secret which we have just proved is beyond our own capability.

When a man has once deeply wounded a woman's pride, he may just as well give up his hope of winning her. At that barrier, the little blind god may plead in vain. Love's face may be sad, his big, sightless eyes soft with tears, and his helpless hands outstretched in pleading and prayer, but that stern sentinel will never yield. Wounded love is easily forgiven, wounded belief sometimes forgotten, but wounded pride — never. It is the adamantine fortress. There is only one path which leads to the house of forgiveness — that of understanding, and it is impassable if woman's pride has come between.

A girl never knows whether a courtship

The Continuous Caller

is in progress or not, unless a man tells her. He may be interested and amused, but not in love. It is only in the comic papers that a stern parent waits upon the continuous caller and demands to know his "intentions," so a girl must, perforce, be her own guide.

A man may call upon a girl so constantly and so regularly that the neighbours daily expect wedding invitations, and the family inquire why he does not have his trunk sent to the house. Later, quite casually, he will announce his engagement to a girl who is somewhere else. This fiancée is always a peculiarly broad-minded girl who knows all about her lover's attentions to the other and does not in the least object. She wants him to "have a good time" when he is away from her, and he is naturally anxious to please her. He wants the other girl to know his wife — he is sure they will be good friends.

Lasting feminine friendships are not built upon foundations of that kind. It is very unfortunate, for the world would be gladdened by many more than now exist.

According to geometry, "things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each

A happy Triumvirate

other," and it would seem, from the standpoint of pure reason, that people who are fond of the same people would naturally be congenial and take pleasure in being together.

But a sensitive spinster is often grieved when she discovers that her men friends do not readily assimilate. If she leaves two of them to entertain each other, the conversation does not flow with desirable spontaneity. There is no lack of courtesy between them, however, even of that finer sort which keeps them both there, lest one, by leaving, should seem to remind his companion that it was late.

On the contrary, if a man is fond of two different girls, they are seldom to be seen apart. They exchange long visits regularly and this thoughtfulness often saves him from making an extra call.

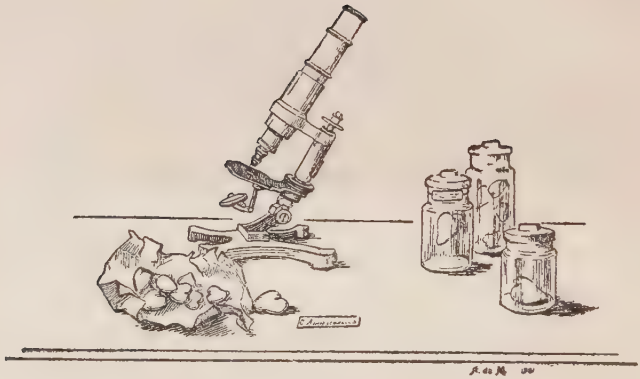
A happy triumvirate is thus formed and the claws of it do not show. Sometimes it is hard to decide between them, and he cuts the Gordian knot by marrying someone else, but the friendship is never the same afterward. The girls are no longer boon companions and when the man crosses their

paths, they manage to convey the impression of great distance.

Narrowed Down to Two

In the beginning, almost any number may join in the game, but the inevitable process of selection eventually narrows it down to two. Society has given men a little the best of it, but perhaps woman's finer sight compensates her for the apparent disadvantages —and even Love, who deals the cards, is too blind to see the fatal consequences of his mistakes.

The Natural History of Proposals



The Natural History of Proposals

The Inquiring Spinster

THERE is no subject which presents more difficulties to the inquiring spinster. Contemporary spinsters, when approached upon the topic, are anything but encouraging; apparently lacking the ability to distinguish between impertinent intrusion into their personal affairs and the scientific spirit which prompts the collection of statistics.

Married women, when asked to repeat the exact language of the lover at the happy moment, are wont to transfix the sensitive aspirant for knowledge with lofty scorn. Mothers are accustomed to dissemble and say they "have forgotten." Men in general are uncommunicative, though occasionally some rare soul will expand under the influence of food and freely give more valuable information than can be extracted from an indefinite number of women.

One's own experience is naturally limited,

Disillusion

even though proposals constitute the main joy and excitement of the spinster's monotonous life. Emerson says: "All is sour if seen as experience," though the gentle sage was not referring especially to offers of marriage. Nevertheless, there is a charm about other people's affairs which would render life beautiful indeed if it could be added to one's own.

Nothing strengthens a woman's self-confidence like a proposal. One is a wonder, two a superfluity, and three an epidemic. Four are proof of unusual charm, five go to the head, and it is a rare girl whom six or seven will not permanently spoil.

To the girl fed upon fiction, the first proposal comes in the nature of a shock. Disillusion follows as a matter of course. Men, evidently, do not read fiction, or at least do not profit by the valuable hints to be found in any novel.

A small book entitled : *How Men Propose*, was eagerly sought by young women who were awaiting definite experience. This was discovered to be a collection of proposals carefully selected from fiction. It was done with care and discernment, but was not satisfying.

"In Books!"

The natural inference was that the actual affairs were just like those in the book.

Nothing can exceed the grace and tenderness with which men propose — in books. Such chivalrous worship, such pleasing deference is accorded — in books! Such pretty pleading, such knightly vows of eternal allegiance, as are always found—in books!

The hero of a few years back was wont to make his offer on his knees. He also haunted the home of the beloved maiden, deeming himself well repaid for five hours wait if he had a fleeting glimpse of her at the window. Torn hair was frequent, and refusal drove men to suicide and madness.

The young women who were the cause of all this trouble were never more than eighteen or twenty years of age. Mature spinsters of twenty-five figured as envious deterrents in the happy affair. Many a story-book marriage has been spoiled by the jealousy of the wrinkled rival of twenty-five.

The violent protestations of the lover in the novel were indeed something to be awaited with fear and trembling. With her anticipations aroused by this kind of reading and her

The First Proposal

eagerness whetted by interminable years of waiting, Mademoiselle receives her first offer of marriage.

She is in doubt, at first, as to whether it is a proposal. It seems like some dreadful mistake. Where is the courtly manner of the lover in the book? What is the matter with this red-faced boy? Where is the pretty pleading, the gracious speech? Why should a lover stammer and confuse his verbs?

Mademoiselle recoils in disgust. This, then, is what she has been waiting for. It is not at all like the book. Her lover is entirely different from other girls' lovers—so different that he is pathetic.

Her faith in the gospel of romance is sadly shaken, when the next experience is a great deal like the first. No one, in the book, could doubt the lover's meaning. Yet in the halting sentences and confused metaphors of actual experience, there is sometimes much question as to what he really means. A girl often has to ask a man if he has just proposed to her, that she may accept or refuse, in a gracious and proper way.

In a girl's early ideas on the subject, she has

The Ordeal

much sympathy for the man who has to undergo the ordeal of asking a woman to be his wife. She thinks he must contemplate the momentous step for weeks, await the opportunity with expectant terror, and when his lady is in a happy mood, recite with fear and trembling, the proposal which he has written out and learned, appropriately enough, by heart.

Later, she comes to know that after the first few times, men propose as thoughtlessly and easily as they dress for dinner, that they devote no particular study to the art, that constant practice makes them proficient, and that almost any girl will do when the proposal mood is on.

She discovers that they often do it simply to make a pleasing impression upon a girl, with no thought of acceptance. Many an engagement is more of a surprise to the man than to anybody else.

Because fiction comes very near to the heart of woman, she invariably follows its dictates and shows great astonishment at every proposal. The women who have been thus surprised are even more rare than days in June.

The False and the True

When a man begins to compare a girl to a flower, a baby, or a kitten, she knows what is coming next. She spends her mental energy in distinguishing the false from the true —which is sufficient employment for anyone. There is not enough cerebral tissue to waste much of it upon unnecessary processes.

It is very hard to tell whether a man really means a proposal. It may have been made under romantic circumstances, or because he was lonesome for the other girl, or, in the case of an heiress, because he was tired of work. Longing for the absent sweetheart will frequently cause a man to become engaged to someone near by, because, though absence may make a woman's heart grow fonder, it is presence that plays the mischief with a man. No wise girl would accept a man who proposed by moonlight or just after a meal. The dear things are n't themselves then.

Food, properly served, will attract a proposal at almost any time, especially if it is known that the pleasing viands were of the girl's own making. Cooking and love may seem at first glance to be widely separated,

Written Proposals

but no woman can have one without the other. The brotherly love for all creation, which emanates from the well-fed man, overflows, concentrates, and naturally becomes a proposal.

Other things being equal, a written proposal is apt to be genuine, especially if it is signed with the full name and address of the writer, and the date is not omitted. Long and painful experience in the courts of his country has made man wary of direct evidence.

But a written proposal is extremely bad form. A girl never can be sure that her lover did not attempt to fish it out of the letter-box after it had slipped from his fingers. The author of *How to Be Happy, Though Married,* once saw a miserable young man attempting to get his convicting letter back by means of a forked stick. The sight must be quite common everywhere. Proposing in haste and repenting at leisure is not by any means unusual.

Then, too, a girl misses a possible opportunity of seeing a man blush and stammer. One does not often get a chance to see a man

Confusion and Awkwardness

willingly making himself ridiculous, and the spectacle is worth waiting for.

Confusion and awkwardness are high trumps with a woman, for they indicate inexperience and uncertainty. The man who proposes in a finished and nonchalant manner, as if he had done it frequently and were sure of the result, is now and then astonished at a refusal. It is also a risk to offer a ring immediately after acceptance. The suspicion is that the ring has been worn before, or else the man was sure enough of the girl to invest heavily in his future.

Sometimes a man will disclose to a platonic friend the form he habitually employs in proposals. The hero of battle engagements has proverbial charm for woman, and the hero of matrimonial engagements is meat and drink to the spinster athirst for knowledge.

Feed the man, and when the brotherly love for the entire universe begins to radiate, approach him gently upon the subject.

"Why, bless your little heart," the man will say, "of course I'll tell you about it. Yes, you're right in supposing that I know more about it than anyone else you know.

"One of the Best Proposals"

I've never been refused in my life and I know I've asked a hundred. I've had medals for that.

"I always try to make each one different," he will continue. "Girls sometimes compare notes and it makes it awkward. The girl I'm engaged to now does n't know any of my other girls, though, so I 'm safe enough.

"I 'll never forget the way I did that. I think it was one of the best proposals I ever made. She 's a mighty pretty little thing,—blue eyes and black hair,—a regular Irish type. I must tell you first, though, how I came to know her.

"The one I was engaged to just before I asked her, had just broken it off on account of property which her children would lose if she married again. She was a widow, you know. I've told you about her—the one with red hair. Between you and me, that 's the only woman in God's world my heart ever went out to. That is the love of my life. Her little girl, eleven years old, was in love with me, too. She used to tremble when I kissed her, and was jealous of her mother. But this little girl I 'm engaged to now, why I just love the ground she walks on.

"A Very Peculiar Affair"

"Well," after a pause, "this was a very peculiar affair. Of course I was all broken up over losing her—could n't eat nor sleep—I was a perfect wreck. This old friend of mine happened along, and he says, 'You 'll have to brace up, old man. Come on out to my house in the country and rest up a bit.' So I went, and met his daughter.

"Five days after I met her, I asked him for her hand. I explained it to him just as I would to my own father, and he understood all right. He 's a fine fellow. He said I could have her. Of course I 'd asked her first.

"Yes—I 'm getting to that. I took her out for a walk one afternoon, and when we came to the river, we sat down to talk. It was a perfect day. I began by saying how sad it was to see a beautiful flower and to know that it was out of one's reach, or to see anything beautiful and know that one never could possess it. I led up to the subject by gentle degrees, and then I said: 'You must have seen that I love you, and you know without my telling you, that I want you to be my wife. I don't say I want you to marry me,

In Spite of Varied Resources

because I want you to do more than that —I want you to be my wife.' (Fine distinction that!)

"Well, she was very much surprised, of course, but she accepted me all right. Yes, I told her about the other woman, but in such a way that she understood it perfectly. Lots of other fellows wanted her and I snatched the prize from right under their very noses. I don't suppose I'll ever propose any more now. I'd never propose to you, even if I were free to do so, because I know you'd refuse me. You'd refuse me, wouldn't you? Somebody else might just as well have me, if you don't want me."

Yet in spite of the varied resources at woman's command, we sometimes hear of one who yearns for the privilege of seeking man in marriage. The woman who longs for the right to propose is evidently not bright enough to bring a man to the point.

Still worse than this, there are cases on record where women, not reigning queens, have actually proposed to men. The men who are thus sought in the bonds of matrimony are not slow to tell of it, confining

Hints

themselves usually to their own particular circle of men friends. But the news sometimes filters through man's capacity to keep a secret, and the knowledge is diffused among interested spinsters.

What men term "hints" are not out of place, for the proposal market would be less active, were it not for "hints." But these are seldom given in words — unless a man happens to be particularly stupid.

When the proposal habit is not firmly fastened upon a man, and he begins to have serious designs upon some one girl, she knows it long before he does. Incidentally, the family and the neighbours have their suspicions.

Woman, with her strong dramatic instinct, wishes the proposal to occur according to accepted rules. Hence, if a man shows symptoms of whispering the momentous question in a crowd, he is apt to be delicately discouraged, and if the girl is not satisfied with her own appearance, there will also be postponement. No girl wants to be proposed to when her hair is dishevelled, her collar wilted, and her soul distraught by pestiferous mosquitoes.

Hints

But an ambitious and painstaking girl will arrange the stage for a proposal, with untiring patience, months before it actually happens. When she practices assiduously all the morning, that she may execute difficult passages with apparent ease in the evening, and willingly turns the freezer that there may be cooling ice opportunely left after dinner, to "melt if somebody does n't eat it," she expects something to happen.

When the man finally appears, and the little brother marches off like a well-trained soldier, with two nickels jingling in his pocket, even the victim might be on his guard. When the family are unceremoniously put out of the house, and father, mother, and sisters are seen in the summer twilight, wandering in disconsolate pairs, let the neighbours keep away from the house under penalty of the girl's lasting hate.

Sometimes, when the family have been put out, and the common human interest leads intimate spinster friends to pass the house, there is nothing to be seen but the girl playing accompaniments for the man while he sings.

A Formal Proposal

Yet the initiated know, for if a girl only praises a man's singing enough, he will most surely propose to her before many moons have passed. The scheme has a two-fold purpose, because all may see that he finds the house attractive, and if no engagement is announced, the entire affair may easily be explained upon musical and platonic grounds.

Owing to the distorted methods of courtship which prevail at the present day, a girl may never be sure that a man really cares for her until he makes a formal proposal. If a man were accepted the minute he proposed, he would think the girl had been his for some time, and would unconsciously class her as among those easily won.

The insinuation that she has been easily won is the thing which is not to be borne. It may have been simple enough, in fact, but let a man beware how he trifles with this delicate subject, even after fifty years of marriage.

Consequently, it is the proper thing to take the matter under advisement and never to accept definitely without a period of probation. This is the happiest time of a girl's life. She is

On Probation

absolutely sure of her lover and may administer hope, fear, doubt, and discouragement to her heart's content.

The delicate attentions which are showered upon her are the envy of every spinster on the street who does not know the true state of the affair. Sometimes, with indifferent generosity, she divides her roses and invites the less fortunate to share her chocolates. This always pleases the man, if he knows about it.

Also, because she is not in the least bound, she makes the best of this last freedom and accepts the same courtesies from other men. Nothing is so well calculated to sound the depths of original sin in man's nature, as to find his rival's roses side by side with his, when a girl has him on probation. And he never feels so entirely similar to an utter idiot, as when he sees a girl to whom he has definitely committed himself, flirting cheerfully with two or three other men.

Woe be to him if he remonstrates! For Mademoiselle is testing him with this end in view. If he complains bitterly of her outrageous behaviour, she dismisses him with

Opportunity for Fine Work

sorrowful dignity, jealousy being the one thing she cannot tolerate in men.

There is opportunity for fine work in the situation which the young woman immediately develops. A man may take his choice of the evils which lie before him, for almost anything may happen.

He may complain, and if he shows anger, there is war. If he betrays jealousy, there is trouble which marriage will accentuate, rather than lessen. If he shows concern because his beloved is so fickle, and insinuates that so unstable a person will not make a good wife, he touches pride in a vital spot and his cause is no more. Let him be manfully unconcerned; as far above jealousy and angry reproach as a St. Bernard is above a kitten—and Mademoiselle is his.

Philosophers laugh at woman's fickleness, but her constancy, when once awakened, endures beyond life and death, and sometimes beyond betrayal. But this is not to be won by a jealous man, for jealousy is the mother-in-law of selfishness, and a woman never permits a man to rival her in her own particular field.

Another Danger

If a man safely passes the test of probation, there is yet another danger which lies between him and the realisation of his ambition. This is the tendency of women to conduct excavations into a man's previous affairs.

He needs the wisdom of the serpent at this juncture, for under the smiling sweetness a dagger is often concealed. If the point is allowed to show during an engagement, the whole blade will frequently flash during marriage.

"Yes, dearest," a man will say, tenderly, "I have loved before, but that was long ago —long before I met you. She was beautiful, tall, dark, majestic, with a regal nature like herself—Good Heavens, how I loved her!"

This is apt to continue for some little time, if a man gets thoroughly interested in his subject and thinks he is talking rather well, before he discovers that his petite blonde divinity is either a frozen statue, or a veritable Niobe as to tears. And not one man in three hundred and nineteen ever suspects what he has done!

A woman is more jealous of the girls a man has loved, whom she has never seen, than of

The Thought of Defection

any number of attractive rivals. In the blind adoration which he yields her, she takes no thought of immediate defection, for her smile always makes him happy — her voice never loses its mystic power over his senses.

On the contrary, a man never stoops to be jealous of the men who have pleaded in vain for what he has won, nor even of possible fiancés whom later discretion has discarded. He is sure of her at the present moment and his doubt centres itself comfortably upon the future, which is always shadowy and unreal to a man, because he is less imaginative than woman.

And yet—there is no more dangerous companion for a woman than the man who has loved her. It is easier to waken a woman's old love than to teach her a new affection. Strangely enough, the woman a man has once loved and then forgotten is powerless in the after years. A man's dead friendship may dream of resurrection, but never his dead love.

Jealousy and distrust have never yet won a doubting heart. Bitterness never accomplishes miracles which sweetness fails to do.

"The Milk of Human Kindness"

Too often men and women spend their time in wondering why they are not loved, trying various schemes and pitiful experiments, and passing by the simple method of trying to be lovable and unconscious of self.

"The milk of human kindness" seldom produces cream, but there is only one way by which love may be won or kept. Perfection means a continual shifting of standards and must ever be unattainable, but the man or woman who is simply lovable will be wholly taken into other hearts—faults and all.

Now and then a man's love is hopeless, from causes which are innate and beyond control. Sometimes regret strikes deep and lasts for more than a day, as in the pages of the story books which women love to read. Sometimes, too, a tender-hearted woman, seeing far into the future, will do her best to spare a fellow-creature pain.

But this is the exception, rather than the rule. The average woman regards a certain number of proposals as but a just tribute to her own charm. Sometimes she sees what she has unconsciously done when it is too late to retreat, but even then, though pity,

The Wine of Conquest

regret, and honest pain may result from it, there is one effect more certain still—the intoxication of the wine of conquest, against which no woman is proof.

Love Letters: Old and New

Love Letters: Old and New

The Average Love Letter

THE average love letter is sufficient to make a sensitive spinster weep, unless she herself is in love and the letter be addressed to her. The first stage of the tender passion renders a man careless as to his punctuation, the second seriously affects his spelling, and in the last period of the malady, his grammar develops locomotor ataxia. The single blessedness of school-teachers is largely to be attributed to this cause.

A real love letter is absolutely ridiculous to everyone except the writer and the recipient. A composition, which repeats the same term of endearment thirteen times on a page, has certainly no particular claim to literary art.

When a man writes a love letter, dated, and fully identified by name and address, there is no question but that he is in earnest. A large number of people consider nothing so innocently entertaining as love letters, read in a

Sins of Commission

court-room, with due attention to effect, by the counsel for the other side.

Affairs of that kind are given scarlet headlines in the saffron journals, and if the letters are really well done, it means the sale of an "extra." No man can hope to write anything which will possess such general interest as his love letters. If Shakespeare had written voluminously to his sweetheart—to any of his sweethearts—and the letters should be found by this generation, what a hue and cry would be raised over his peaceful ashes!

Doing the things which ought not to be done never loses fascination and charm. The rare pleasure thus obtained far exceeds the enjoyment of leaving undone things which ought to be done. Sins of commission are far more productive of happiness than the sins of omission.

Thus people whose sense of honour would not permit them to read an open letter which belonged to someone else will go by thousands to purchase the published letters of some famous man. Dr. Arbuthnot, in speaking of the publication of letters, said that it added a new terror to death, so true it is that while a

man may think for the present, he unavoidably writes for posterity.

For Posterity

No passion is too sacred to be hidden from the eagle eye of the public. The death of anyone of more than passing fame is followed by a volume of "letters." It is pathetic to read these posthumous pages, which should have been buried with the hands that wrote them, or consigned to the never-failing mercy of the flames.

Burial has not always sufficed. The manuscript of one well-known book of poems was buried with the lady to whom they were written, but in later years her resting-place was disturbed, with the consent of her lover, for this very manuscript.

Her golden hair had grown after her death, and was found closely entwined with the written pages—so closely that it had to be cut. The loving embrace which Death would not break was rudely forced to yield. Even in her "narrow house" she might not keep her love letters in peace, since the public wanted to read what had been written for her alone and the publisher was waiting for "copy."

In a paper of the *Tatler,* written by Addison

Letters in a Grave

or Steele, or possibly by both, is described a party in a country village which is suddenly broken into confusion by the entrance of the sexton of their parish church, fresh from the digging of a grave. The sexton tells the merrymakers how a chance blow of his pick-axe has opened a decayed coffin, in which are discovered several papers.

These are found to be the love letters received by the wife of Sir Thomas Chichley, one of the admirals of King William. Most of the letters were ruined by damp and mould, but "here and there," says the *Tatler*, "a few words such as 'my soul,' 'dearest,' 'roses,' and 'my angel,' still remained legible, resisting the corrupting influence of Time."

One of these letters in a grave, which Lady Chichley had requested might be buried with her in her coffin, was found entire, though discoloured by the lapse of twenty years. Its words were these :

"MADAM :

"If you would know the greatness of my love, consider that of your own beauty. That blooming countenance, that snowy

bosom, that graceful person, return every moment to my imagination; the brightness of your eyes hindered me from closing mine since I last saw you. You may still add to your beauties by a smile. A frown will make me the most wretched of men, as I am the most passionate of lovers."

Death is the advertisement, at the end of an autobiography, wherein people discover its virtues. The public which refused a bare subsistence to the living genius will make his children comfortable by generously purchasing his letters, which were never meant for them.

The pathetic story of the inner struggle, which would have crucified the sensitive soul were it known to any save his dearest friends, is proudly blazoned forth — in print! Hopes and fears and trials are no longer concealed. Illness, poverty, and despair are given rubricated pages. The sorrowful letter to a friend, asking for five or ten dollars, is reproduced in facsimile.

That it shows the human side of the genius is no excuse for the desecration. What of

The Soldier of the World

the sunny soul who always sang courage, while he himself was suffering from hope deferred! What of him who wrote in an attic, often hungry for his daily bread, and took care to give the impression of warmth and comfort! Why should his stern necessity be disclosed to the public that would not give him bread in return for his songs? It is enough to make the gallant soldier of the world turn uneasily in his grave.

In this way a bit of the greatness so bravely won is often lost, and sometimes illusions are dispelled which all must regret. For years, we have read with delight Mrs. Browning's exquisite poem beginning:

> "I have a name, a little name
> Uncadenced for the ear."

Throughout the poem there is no disclosure, but, so sure is her art, that there is no sense of loss or wonder. But the pitiless searchlight of the century is turned upon the Browning love letters, and thus we learn that Mrs. Browning's pet name was *Ba!*

Pretty enough, perhaps, when spoken by a lover and a poet, or in shaded nooks, to the music of Italian streams, but quite unsuited to

With the Future in View

the present, even though it were to be read only by lovers equally fond.

"Though I write books, it will be read
Upon the page of none ——"

Poor Mrs. Browning! Little did she know!

There have been some, no doubt, who have written with the future in view, though Abelard, who broke a woman's heart, could not have foreseen that his only claims to distinction would rest upon his letters to loving, faithful Héloise. The life which was to be too great for her to share is remembered now only because of her. Mocking Fate has brought the wronged woman an exquisite revenge.

That delightful spendthrift and scapegrace, Richard Steele, has left a large number of whimsical letters, addressed to the lady he married. She might possibly object to their publication, but not Steele! Indeed, she was a foolish woman to keep this letter:

"Dear Prue:

"The afternoon coach will bring you ten pounds. Your letter shows that you are pas-

Systematic Lovers

sionately in love with me. But we must take our portion of life without repining and I consider that good nature, added to the beautiful form God has given you, would make our happiness too great for human life. Your most obliged husband and most humble servant, RICH. STEELE."

Alexander Pope was another who wrote for posterity. In spite of his deformity, he appears to have been touched to the heart by women, but vanity and selfishness tinged all of his letters.

Robert Burns was a systematic lover of anything in petticoats, and has left such a mass of amatory correspondence that his biographer was sorely perplexed. There could not have been a pretty maid in the British Isles, to whom chance had been kind, who had not somewhere the usual packet of love letters from "Bobby" Burns.

Laurence Sterne was no less generous with his affection, if the stories are true. At twenty, he fell in love with Elizabeth Lumley, and from his letters to her, one might easily fancy that love was a devastating and hopeless

Left by the Dead

disease. There was a pretty little "Kitty" who claimed his devotion, and countless other affairs, before "Eliza" appeared. "Eliza" was a married woman and apparently the last love of the heart-scarred Sterne.

No earthly thing is so nearly immortal as a love letter, and nothing is so sorrowful as those left by the dead. The beautiful body may be dust and all but forgotten, while the work of the loving hands lives on. Even those written by the ancient Egyptians are seemingly imperishable. The clay tablet on which one of the Pharaohs wrote a love letter, asking the hand of a foreign princess, is to-day in the British Museum.

The first time a woman cries after she is married, she reads over all the love letters the other men have written her, for a love letter is something a tender-hearted woman cannot bring herself to destroy.

The love letters of the man she did not marry still possess lingering interest. The letters of many a successful man of affairs are still hidden in the treasure-box of the woman he loved, but did not marry. Both have formed other ties and children have risen

The New Child

up to call them blessed, or whatever the children may please, for even more dreadful than the new woman is the new child. Between them, they are likely to produce a new man.

The new child is apt to find the letters and read them aloud to the wrong people, being most successfully unexpected and inopportune. A box of old letters, distributed sparingly at the doors of mutual friends, is the distinguishing feature of a lovely game called "playing postman." Social upheavals have occurred from so small a cause as this.

It sometimes happens, too, that when a girl has promised to marry a man and the wedding day is set, she receives from a mutual friend a package of faded letters and a note which runs something like this :

"My Dear :

"Now that my old friend's wedding day is approaching, I feel that I have no longer the right to keep his letters. They are too beautiful and tender to be burned and I have not the heart to make that disposition of them. Were I to return them to him, he would

doubtless toss them into the fire, and I cannot bear to have them lost.

"So, after thinking about it for some time, I have concluded to send them to you, who are the rightful keeper of his happiness, as well as of his letters. I trust that you may find a place for these among those which he has addressed to you. Wishing you all happiness in the future, believe me to be

"Very sincerely and affectionately yours."

The dainty and appropriate wedding gift is not often shown to the happy man, but every page and every line is carefully read. Now and then the bride-elect advances boldly to the firing line and writes a letter of thanks after this fashion :

"It is very sweet and thoughtful of you, my dear friend, to send me the letters. Of course I shall keep them in with mine, though I have but few, for the dear boy has never been able to leave me for more than a day, since first we met.

"Long before we became engaged, he made me a present of your letters to him,

If a Girl is in Love

which he said were well worth the reading, and indeed, I have found them so. I shall arrange them according to date and sequence, though I observe that you have written much more often than he — I suppose because we foolish women can never say all we want to in one letter and are compelled to add post-scripts, sometimes days apart.

"Believe me, I fully appreciate your wishes for our happiness. I trust you may come to us often and see how your hopes are fulfilled. With many thanks for your loving thought of me, as ever,

Affectionately yours."

If a girl is in love, she carries the last letter inside her shirt-waist in the day time, and puts it under her pillow at night, thereby expecting dreams of the beloved.

But the dispenser of nocturnal visions delights in joking, and though impalpable arms may seem to surround the sleeping spinster and a tender kiss may be imprinted upon her lips, it is not once in seventeen days that the caresses are bestowed by the writer of the letter. It is a politician whose distorted picture

When a Man is in Love

has appeared in the evening paper, some man the girl despises, the postman, or worse yet, the tramp who has begged bread at the door.

When a man is in love, he carries the girl's last letter in his pocket until he has answered it and has another to take its place. He stoops to no such superstition as placing it under his pillow. Neither is it read as often as his letters to her.

A woman never really writes to the man she loves. She simply records her fleeting moods — her caprice, her tenderness, and her dreams. Because of this, she is often misunderstood. If the letter of to-day is different from that of yesterday, her lover, in his heart at least, accuses her of fickleness.

A man's letters to a girl are very frequently shown to her most intimate friend, if they are sufficiently ardent, but a man never shows the letters of a woman he truly cares for, unless he feels the need of some other masculine intellect to assist him in comprehending the lady of his heart.

"Nothing feeds the flame like a letter. It has intent, personality, secrecy." But that

A Single Drop of Ink

is love indeed which stands the test of long separation — and letters.

With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the old Egyptian sorcerer promised to reveal the past and foretell the future. The single drop of ink with which a lover writes may sadly change the blissful future of which he dreams.

The written word is so sadly different from that which is spoken! The malicious demon concealed in the ink bottle delights in wrecking love. Misunderstandings and long silences follow in rapid succession, tenderness changes to coldness, and love to bitter regret.

Someone has said that the true test of congeniality is not a matter of tastes, but of humour. If two people find the same things amusing, their comradeship is a foregone conclusion, but even so, it requires unusual insight to distinguish the playful parts of a letter from the serious passages. If the separated lovers would escape the pit of destruction, let all jokes be plainly marked with a cross or a star.

A letter is an unfair thing. It follows its own mood blindly without reference to others. If penned in sadness it often makes

Misunderstood

a sunny day a cloudy one, and if written in jest it may be as inopportune as mirth at a funeral.

A letter betraying anger and hurt pride may often crystallise a yielding mood into determination and summon evil spirits which love cannot banish. The letter asking forgiveness may cross the path of the one which puts an end to everything. It would seriously test the power of the Egyptian to foretell what might result from a single letter, written in all love and tenderness, perhaps, but destined to be completely misunderstood.

Old love letters often mean tears, because they have been so wrongly read. Later years, with fine irony, sometimes bring new understanding of the loving heart behind the faulty lines. After all, it is the inexpressible atmosphere of a letter which is felt, rather than the meaning which the phrases ostensibly convey.

Tender secrets are concealed in the weather-worn bag of the postman. The lovers may hide their hearts from all but him. Parents, guardians, and even mature maiden aunts may be successfully diverted, but not the postman !

The Postman

He knows that the girl who eagerly watches for him in the morning has more than a passing interest in the mail. He knows where her lover is, how often he writes, when she should have a letter, and whether all is well.

Sometimes, too, he knows that it is better to take a single letter to the house three or four times in succession, rather than to leave it in the hands of one to whom it is not addressed.

Blessed be the countless Cupids in the uniform of the postal service! The little blind god is wont to assume strange forms, apparently at will. But no stern parent could suspect that his sightless eyes were concealed behind the spectacles of a sedate postman, nor that his wicked arrows were hidden under piles of letters.

The uninitiated wonder "what there is to write about." A man may have seen a girl the evening before, and yet a bulky letter comes in the afternoon. And what mysterious interest can make one write three or four times a week?

Where is the girl whose love letter was left in pawn because she could not find her purse?

Dead Roses

The grizzled veteran never collects the "two cents due" on the love letters that are a little overweight. He would not put a value upon anything so precious, and he is seldom a cynic — perhaps because, more than anyone else, he is the dispenser of daily joy.

The reading of old love letters is in some way associated with hair-cloth trunks, mysterious attics, and rainy days. The writers may be unknown and the hands that laid them away long since returned to dust, but the interest still remains.

Dead roses crumble to ashes in the gentle fingers that open the long folded pages — the violets of a forgotten spring impart a delicate fragrance to the yellowed spot on which they lay. The ink is faded and the letter much worn, as though it had lain next to some youthful breast, to be read in silence and solitude until the tender words were graven upon the heart in the exquisite script of Memory.

The phrasing has a peculiar quaintness, old fashioned, perhaps, but with a grace and dignity all its own. Through the formal, stately sentences the hidden sweetness creeps like

The Mysteries of Life and Death

the crimson vine upon the autumn leaves. Brave hearts they had, those lovers of the past, who were making a new country in the wilderness, and yet there was an unsuspected softness — the other "soul side" which even a hero may have, "to show a woman when he loves her."

There are other treasures to be found with the letters — old daguerreotypes, in ornate cases, showing the girlish, sweet face of her who is a grandmother now, or perhaps a soldier in the trappings of war, the first of a valiant line.

There are songs which are never sung, save as a quavering lullaby to some mite who will never remember the tune, and fragments of nocturnes or simple melodies, which awaken the past as surely as the lost shell brings to the traveller inland the surge and thunder of the distant sea.

All the mysteries of life and death are woven in with the letters; those pathetic remembrances which the years may fade but never destroy. There are old school books, dog-eared and musty, scraps of rich brocade and rustling taffeta, the yellowed sampler

Memory's Singing

which was the daily trial of some little maid, and the first white robe of someone who has grown children of his own.

Give Memory an old love letter and listen to her singing. There is quiet at first, as though she were waiting for some step to die away, or some childish laughter to cease. Then there is a hushed arpeggio, struck from strings which are old and worn, but sweet and tender still.

Sometimes the song is of an old farmhouse on the western plains, where life meant struggle and bitter privation. Brothers and sisters, in the torn, faded clothes which were all they had; father's tremulous "God bless you," when someone went away. Mother's never-ending toil, and the day when her roughened hands were crossed upon her breast, at rest for the first time, while the children cried in wonder and fear.

Then the plaintive minor swells for a moment into the full major chord, when Love, the King, in royal purple, took possession of the desolate land. Corn huskings and the sound of "Money Musk," scarlet ears and stolen kisses under the harvest moon, youth

A Magic in the Strings

and laughter, and the eternal, wavering hope for better things. Long years of toil, with interludes of peace and divine content, little voices, and sometimes a little grave. Separation and estrangement, trust and misgiving, heartache and defeat.

The tears may start at Memory's singing, but as the song goes on there comes peace, for there is a magic in the strings which changes sadness into something sweet. Memory's eyes are deep and tender and her heart is full of compassion. So the old love letters bring happiness after all—like the smile which sometimes rests upon the faces of the dead.

An Inquiry into Marriage

An Inquiry into Marriage

Like a Grape

MARRIAGE appears to be somewhat like a grape. People swallow a great deal of indifferent good for the sake of the lurking bit of sweetness and never know until it is too late whether the venture was wise.

Chaucer compared it to a crowded church. Those left on the outside are eager to get in, and those caught inside are straining every nerve to get out. There are many, in this year of grace, who have safely made their escape, but, unfortunately, the happy ones inside say little about it, and do not seem anxious to get out.

Fate takes great pleasure in confusing the inquiring spinster. Some of the disappointed ones will advise her never to attempt it, and in the voluble justification which follows, she sees clearly that the discord was not entirely caused by the other. Her friends, who have been married a year or so, regard her with

The Consistent Lady

evident pity, and occasionally suggest, delicately enough, to be sure, that she could never have had a proposal.

Among her married friends who are more mature, there is usually one who chooses her for a confidant. This consistent lady will sob out her unhappiness on the girl's shoulder, and the next week ask her why she does n't get married. Sometimes she invites the girl to her house to meet some new and attractive man — with the memory of those bitter tears still in her heart.

A girl often loses a friend by heartily endorsing the things the weeper says of her husband. The fact that he is an inconsiderate brute is frequently confided to the kindly surface of a clean shirt-waist, regardless of laundry bills. The girl remarks dispassionately that she has noticed it ; that he never considers the happiness of his wife, and she does n't see how the tearful one stands it. Behold the instant and painful transformation ! It is very hard to be a popular spinster when one has many married friends.

That interesting pessimist, Herr Arthur Schopenhauer, advocates universal polygamy

Seven Husbands

upon the theory that all women would thus be supported. To the unprejudiced observer who reads the comic papers and goes to afternoon receptions, it would seem that each woman should have several husbands, to pay her bills and see that she is suitably escorted to various social affairs.

If a woman had seven husbands, for instance, it is possible that some one of them would be willing to take her out whenever she wanted to go. If she yearned for a sealskin coat or a diamond pin and no one of them was equal to the occasion, a collection could be taken up. Two or three might contribute to the good cause and be so beautifully rewarded with smiles and favourite dishes that the remainder of the husbands would be inspired to do something in the same line.

At least five of them could go out every night in the week. The matter could be arranged according to a simple system of rotation, or they might draw lots. There could be a club-room in the house, where they might smoke without affecting the curtains and Madam's temper. Politics and poker make more widows than war, but no woman

Seven Husbands

could find it in her heart to object to the innocent pastime under such happy circumstances, because she would be deprived of nothing—not even her husband's society. Six of them might play, while the other read to their wife, and those who won could buy some lovely new china for the house.

The sweetness of the lady of their several hearts would be increased seven-fold, while her frowns would be equally divided among them. There would be a large and enviable freedom accorded everyone. There would always be enough at home so dinner need not wait, and Madam would be spared one great annoyance. If the servants left suddenly, as is not unusual, there would be men enough to cook a dinner Epicurus might envy, each one using his own chafing-dish. Men make better cooks than women because they put so much more feeling into it.

The spirit of gentle rivalry, which would thus be developed, is well worth considering. Some one of the seven would always be a lover. To sustain the old relation continuously after marriage undoubtedly requires gifts of tact and temperament which are not

often vouchsafed to men, and this would not prove so irksome if the tender obligation were shared. Marriage would no longer be the cold potato of love.

Different men always admire different qualities of the same woman, and the beauty of the much-married lady would be developed far beyond that of her who had only one husband, because a recognised virtue is stimulated.

If a man admires a woman's teeth, she gets new kinds of dentifrice and constantly endeavours to add to their whiteness. If he speaks approvingly of her hair, various tonics are purchased. If he alludes to her mellow voice, she tries conscientiously to make it more beautiful still.

There is a suspected but not verified relation between a man's affection and his digestion. With this ideal method of marriage in force, the dyspeptics could go off by themselves until they felt better, and not be bothered with tender inquiries concerning their health. If the latch key unaccountably refused to work at two o'clock in the morning, some other member of the husband could always assist

The Financial Burden

the absent ones in, and Madam would never know how many were late.

The financial burden would indeed be light. The household expenses might be divided equally and relieving the wife's necessities would be the happiness of all. One might assume the responsibility of her gowns, another of her hats and gloves, another might keep her supplied with bonbons, matinée tickets, flowers, and silk stockings, another might attend to her jackets and her club dues, her jewels might be the care of another, and so on. It would be the joy of all of them to see their peerless wife well dressed, and when she wanted anything in particular, she need only smile sweetly upon the one whose happy lot it was to have charge of that department of expense.

There would be no friction, no discord. Madam would be blissfully content, and men have claimed for years that they could live together much more amicably than women, and that they never quarrel among themselves, save in rare instances. This, they say, is because they are so liberal in their views, but a great many men are so broad-minded that it makes their heads flat.

The Most Nervous Time

It is strange that this happy form of polygamy did not occur to Herr Schopenhauer. It may be because he was a pessimist—and a man.

The most nervous time of a man's life is the day of his wedding. The bachelors and benedicts give different reasons for this when they are gently approached upon the subject, but the majority admit, with lovable and refreshing conceit, that it is because of their innate modesty and their aversion to conspicuous prominence.

If this is truly the reason, the widespread fear may be much lessened, for in the grand matrimonial pageant, the man is the most obscure member of the procession. People are not apt to think of him at all until the ceremony is over and the girl has a new name. What he wears is of no consequence, and he has no wedding gifts, though he may be remembered for a moment if he gives a diamond star to the bride. Yet it is this ceremony which changes him from a vassal to a king. Before marriage he is a low and useless trump, but afterward he is ace high in the game.

A latter-day philosopher has beautifully

A Trip Down Town

likened marriage to a trip down-town. A man leaves the house in the morning, his mind already active concerning the affairs of the day. His newspaper is in his pocket, he has plenty of time to reach the office, and his breakfast has begun to assimilate. Suddenly he sees a yellow speck on the horizon.

He calculates the distance to the corner and quickens his pace, his eyes nobly fixed meanwhile upon the goal of his ambition. Anxiety develops, then fear. At last he surrenders all dignity and gallops madly toward the approaching car, with his coat tails spread to the morning breeze and tears in his eyes. Out of breath, but triumphant, he swings on just as farther pursuit seemed well-nigh hopeless.

Does he stop to chat cheerily with the conductor? Does he dwell upon the luxurious aspect of his conveyance? Does the comfort which he has just secured fill his heart with gladness? Does the plush covering of the seat appeal to his æsthetic sense? No mere woman may ever hope to know, for he grudgingly gives the conductor five pennies, one of

them badly battered and the date beaten out of it—and devotes himself to his paper.

The Masculine Mental Process

The thing which appears unattainable is ever desired by man. A girl who wears an engagement ring upon her finger has a charm for which the unattached sigh in vain. The masculine mental process in such a case, briefly summarised, is something like this.

I. "Wonder who that girl is over there? Red hair and quite a bit of style. Never cared much for red hair—suppose she's got freckles too. Now she's coming this way. Why, there's a solitaire on her finger; she's engaged. Well, he can have her—I won't cut him out. Wonder who she is!

II. "Really, she isn't so bad—I've seen worse. She knows how to dress, and she hasn't so many freckles. Brown eyes—that means temper when associated with red hair. Must be quite a little trick to tame a girl like that. She doesn't look as though she were quite subdued.

III. "He probably does n't know how to manage her. I could train her all right. I would n't mind doing it; I have n't anything

The Masculine Mental Process

much on hand in the girl line. So that 's the cad she 's engaged to ? Poor little girl !

IV. " I feel sorry for that girl, I honestly do. She 's throwing herself away. She can't love that fellow. She 'll get over it when she 's married, and be miserable all the rest of her life. I suppose I ought to save her from him. I think I 'll talk to her about it, but it will have to be done cautiously.

V. " Fine young woman, that. Broad-minded, bright, vivacious, and not half bad to look at. Seemed to take my advice in good part. Those great, deep brown eyes are pathetic. That 's the kind of a girl to be shielded and guarded from all the hard knocks in the world.

VI. " The more I see of that girl, the more I think of her. Those Frenchy touches of dress and that superb red hair make her beautiful. I always did like red hair. Honestly, I think she 's the prettiest girl I ever saw. And her womanliness matches her beauty. Any man might be proud of winning a girl like that.

VII. " The irony of Fate ! The one soul in all the universe that is deep enough to com-

Gold-Brick Tactics

prehend mine, the peerless queen of womankind, she for whom I have waited all my life, is pledged to another! I shall go mad if I bear this any longer. I simply must have her. 'All is fair in love and war'—I'll go and ask her!"

When one man alludes to another as a "confidence man," it is no distinguishing mark, for they instinctively adopt gold-brick tactics when seeking woman in marriage.

Those exquisite hands shall never perform a single menial task! Yet, after marriage, Her Ladyship finds that she is expected to be a cook, nurse, housekeeper, seamstress, chambermaid, waitress, and practical plumber. This is an unconscious tribute to the versatility of woman, since a man thinks he does well if he is a specialist in any one line.

Her slightest wish shall be his law! Yet not only are wishes of no avail, but even pleading and prayer fall upon deaf ears. It will be his delight to see that she wants for nothing, yet she is reduced to the necessity of asking for money—even for carfare—and a man will do for his bicycle what his wife would ask in vain.

A Certain Pitiful Change

Many of the matrimonial infelicities of which both men and women bitterly complain may be traced to the gold-brick delusion. A woman marries in the hope of having a lover and discovers, too late, that she merely has a boarder who is most difficult to please.

There is a certain pitiful change which comes with marriage. The sound of her voice would thrill him to his finger-tips, the touch of her hand make his throat ache, and the light in her eyes set the blood to singing in his veins. With possession, ecstasy changes to content, and the loving woman, dreaming that she may again find what she has so strangely lost, tries to waken the old feeling by pathetic little ways which women read at once, but men never know anything about.

In a way, woman is to blame, but not so much. Her superior insight should give her a better understanding of courtship. A man may mean what he says—at the time he says it—but men and seasons change.

The happiness of the after-years depends largely upon her sense of value and proportion. No woman of artistic judgment would

Value and Proportion

crowd her rooms with bric-à-brac, even though comfort were not lacking. Pictures hung together so closely that the frames touch lose beauty. Space has distinct value, and solid colours, judiciously used, create a harmony impossible to obtain by the continuous use of figured fabrics.

Yet many a woman whose house is a model of taste, whose rooms are spacious and restful, insists upon crowding her marriage with the bric-à-brac of violent affection. She is not content with undecorated spaces ; with interludes of friendship and the appreciation which is felt, rather than spoken. She demands the constant assurances, the unfailing devotion of the lover, and thus loses her atmosphere — and her content.

It seems to be a settled thing that men shall do the courting before marriage and women afterward. Nobody writes articles on "How to Make a Wife Happy," and the innumerable cook books, like an army of grasshoppers, consume and devastate the land.

If women did not demand so much, men in general would be more thoughtful. If it were understood that even after marriage man was

The Tender Thought

still to be the lover, the one who sent roses to his sweetheart would sometimes bring them to his wife. The pretty courtesies would not so often be forgotten.

If the tender thought were in some way shown, and the loving word which leaps to the lips were never forced back, but always spoken, marriage and even life itself would take on new beauty and charm. If a woman has daily evidence of a man's devotion, no matter in how small a way, her hunger and thirst for love are bountifully assuaged. Misunderstandings rapidly grow into coldness and neglect, and foolish woman, blind with love, adopts retribution and recrimination as her weapons. There are a great many men who love their wives simply because they know they would be scalped if they did n't.

Making an issue of a little thing is one of the surest ways to spoil happiness. One's personal pride is felt to be vitally injured by surrender, but there is no quality of human nature so nearly royal as the ability to yield gracefully. It shows small confidence in one's own nature to fear that compromise lessens

Spoiled Children

self-control. To consider constantly the comfort and happiness of another is not a sign of weakness but of strength.

Too many men and women are only spoiled children at heart. The little maid of five or six takes her doll and goes home because her playmates have been unkind. Twenty years later she packs her trunk and goes to her mother's because of some quarrel which had an equally childish beginning.

But the hurts of the after-years are not so easily healed. The children kiss and make up no later than the next day, but, grown to manhood and womanhood, they consider it far beneath their dignity and importance to say "Forgive me," and thus proceed to the matrimonial garbage box by way of the divorce court.

Lovers are wont to consider a marriage license a free ticket to Paradise. Sometimes happiness may be freely given by the dispenser of earthly blessings, but it is more often bought. It is a matter of temperament rather than circumstance, and is to be had only by the two who work for it together, forgiving, forgetting, graciously yielding, and

The Tabbies

looking forward to the perfect understanding which will surely come.

Matches are not all made in heaven. Even the parlour variety sometimes smell of brimstone, and Cupid is blamed for many which are made by cupidity. The gossips and the busybodies would die of mal-nutrition were it not for marriage and its complications.

Two people who have quarrelled cheerfully before marriage and whose engagement has been broken three or four times often surprise the tabbies who prophesy misfortune by settling down into post-nuptial content. Two who are universally pronounced to be "perfectly suited to each other" are soon absolutely miserable. Marriage is the one thing which everyone knows more about than people who are intimately concerned.

We hear a great deal of "unequal marriages," not merely in degree of fortune, but in taste and mental equipment. A man steeped to his finger-tips in the lore of the ancients chooses a pretty butterfly who does not know the difference between a hieroglyph and a Greek verb, and to whom Rome and Carthage are empty names. His friends pre-

"Unequal Marriages"

dict misery, and wonder at his blindness in passing by the young woman of equal outward charm who delivered a scholarly thesis at her commencement and has the degree of Master of Arts.

A talented woman marries a man without proportionate gifts and the tabbies call a special session. It is decided at this conclave that "she is throwing herself away and will regret it." To everyone's surprise, she is occasionally very happy with the man she has chosen, though about some things of no particular importance she knows much more than he.

The law of compensation is as certain in its action as that of gravitation, though it is not so widely understood. Nature demands balance and equality. She is constantly chiselling at the mountain to lower it to the level of the plain, and welding heterogeneous elements into homogeneous groups.

The pretty butterfly may easily prove a balance wheel to the man of much wisdom. She will add a vivid human interest to his abstract pursuits and keep him from growing narrow-minded. He chose the element he

The Certain Instinct

needed to make him symmetrical, with the certain instinct which impels isolated atoms of hydrogen and oxygen to combine in the proportion of two to one.

It never occurs to the tabbies that no talent or facility can ever stifle a woman's nature. The simple need of her heart is never taken into account in the criticism of these marriages which are deemed "unequal." If a woman holds an assistant professorship of mathematics in a university, it is a foregone conclusion that she should fall in love with someone who is proficient in trigonometry and holds his tangents and cosines in high esteem. Happy evenings could then be spent with a book of logarithms and sheets of paper specially cut to accommodate a problem.

Similarity of tastes may sometimes prove an attraction, but very seldom similarity of pursuit. Musicians do not often intermarry, and artists and writers are more apt to choose each other than exponents of their own cult.

It is not surprising if a man who is passionately fond of music falls in love with a woman who has a magnificent voice, or a power which amounts to magic over the strings of

her violin. Appreciation is as essential to happiness as accomplishment, and when the two are balanced in marriage, comradeship is inevitable. An artist may marry a woman who does not understand his pictures, but if she had not appreciated him in ways more vital to his happiness, there would have been no marriage.

Appreciation and Accomplishment

It is pathetic to see what marriage sometimes is, compared with what it might be — to see it degraded to the level of a business transaction when it was meant to be infinitely above the sordid touch of the dollar and the dime. It is a perverted instinct which leads one to marry for money, for it will not buy happiness, though it may secure an imitation which pleases some people for a little while.

There is nothing so beautiful as a girl's dream of her marriage, and nothing so sad as the same girl, if Time brings her disillusion instead of the true marriage which is "a mutual concord and agreement of souls, a harmony in which discord is not even imagined ; the uniting of two mornings that hope to reach the night together."

The world is full of pain and danger for

The Light upon the Altar

those who face it alone, and home, that sanctuary where one may find strength and new courage, must be built upon a foundation of mutual helpfulness and trust. No one can make a home alone. It needs a man's strong hands, a woman's tender hands, and two true hearts.

The light which shines upon the bridal altar is either the white flame of eternal devotion or the sacrificial fire which preys hungrily upon someone's disappointment and someone's broken heart. But to the utter rout of the cynic, the dream which led the two souls thither sometimes becomes divinely true.

Marriage is said to be sufficient "career" for any woman, and it is equally true of men. Like Emerson's vision of friendship, it is fit "not only for serene days and pleasant rambles, but for all the passages of life and death."

It is to make one the stronger because one does not have to go alone. It is to make one's joy the sweeter because it is shared. It is to take the sting away from grief because it is divided, and the dear comfort of the other's love lies forever around the sore and doubting heart.

Fire and Snow

It is to be the light in the darkness, the belief in the distrust, the never-failing source of consolation. It is to be the gentlest of forgiveness for all of one's mistakes—strength and tenderness, passion and purity, the fire and the snow.

It is to make one generous to all the world with one's sympathy and compassion, because in the sanctuary there is no lack of love. It is "the joining together of two souls for life, to strengthen each other in all peril, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting."

The Physiology of Vanity

Vanitas
Vanitatum

The Physiology of Vanity

Conceit and Vanity

"VANITY of vanities, all is vanity!" It is the common human emotion, the root of the personal equation, the baffling residuum in the last analysis of social chemistry. There is a wide difference between conceit and vanity. Conceit is lovable and unconcealed; vanity is supreme selfishness, usually hidden. Conceit is based upon an unselfish desire to please; vanity takes no thought of others which is not based upon egotism.

Vanity and jealousy are closely allied, while conceit is a natural development of altruistic virtue. Conceit is the mildest of vices; vanity is the worst. Men are usually conceited but infrequently vain, while women are seldom afflicted with the lesser vice.

Man's conceit is the simplest form of self-appreciation. He thinks he is extremely good-looking, as men go; that he has seen

The One Object

the world ; that he is a good judge of dinners and of human nature ; that he is one of the few men who may easily charm a woman.

The limits of man's conceit are usually in full view, but eye nor opera-glass has not yet approached the end of woman's vanity. The disease is contagious, and the men who suffer from it are usually those whose chosen companions are women.

Woman's vanity is a development of her insatiate thirst for love. Her smiles and tears are all-powerful with her lover, and nothing goes so quickly to a woman's head as a sense of power. She forever defies the Salic law—each woman feels that her rightful place is upon a throne.

The one object of woman's life is the acquirement of power through love. It is because this power is freely recognised by the men who seek her in marriage that her vanity seldom has full scope until after she is married.

After marriage, a great many women begin the slow process of alienating a man from his family, blind to the fact that by lessening his love for others, they add nothing to their own store. The filial and fraternal love is not to

The Destroyer

be given to anyone but mother and sisters—they have no place in a man's heart that another woman could fill. The destroyer simply obliterates that part of his life and offers nothing in its place.

The achievement sometimes takes years, but it is none the less sure. Later, it may be extended to father and brothers, but they are always the last to be considered.

It is most difficult of all to break the tie which binds a man to his mother. The one who bore him is not faultless, for motherhood brings new gifts of feeling, sometimes sacrificing judgment and clear vision to selfish unselfishness. It is only in fiction and poetry that such love is valued now, for the divine blindness which does not question, which asks only the right to give, has lost beauty in our age of reason and restraint.

He had thought that face the most beautiful in all the world—until he fell in love. Now he sees his mother as she is ; a wrinkled old woman, perverse, unreasonable, and inclined to meddle with his domestic affairs. The hands that soothed his childish fretting are no longer lovely. Inattention to small

The Awakening

details of dress, which he never noticed before, are painfully evident. The eyes that have watched him all his life with loving anxiety, shining with pride at his success and softening with tenderest pity at his mistakes, are subtly different now. He wonders at his blindness. It is strange, indeed, that he has not realised all this before.

To most men the awakening comes too late if it comes at all. Only when the faded eyes are closed and the worn hands folded forever ; when "mother" is beyond the reach of praise or blame, her married boy realises what has been done. With that first shock comes bitterest repentance—and he never forgives his wife. Many a woman who complains of "coldness" and "lost love" might trace it back to the day her husband's mother died, and to the sudden flash of insight, the adjustment of relation, which comes with death.

The comic papers have made the mother-in-law a thing to be dreaded. She is the poster attached to the matrimonial magazine which inspires would-be purchasers with awe. Many an engaged girl confides to her best friend that her fiancé's mother is "an old

cat." She usually goes still further, and gives jealousy as the cause of it.

One in a Thousand

No right-minded mother was ever jealous of the woman her son chose for his wife. But she has seen how marriage changes men and naturally fears the result. The altar is the grave of many a boy's love for his mother. Neither of the women most intimately concerned is blind to the impending possibilities; it is only man who cannot see.

There are some girls who realise what it means, but they are few and far between. One in a thousand, perhaps, will openly acknowledge her debt to the woman who for twenty-five or thirty years has given her best thought to the man she is about to marry.

Is he strong and active, healthy and finely moulded? It is his mother's care for the first sixteen years of his life. It is the result of her anxious days and of many a sleepless night, while the potential man was racked with fever and childish ills. His chivalrous devotion to the girl he loves is wholly due to his mother's influence. His clean and open-hearted manliness is a free gift to her, from the woman now characterised as "an old cat."

The Thirst for Power

It is seldom that the mother receives credit for his virtues, but she is invariably blamed for his faults. Too many women expect a man to be cut out by their pattern. The supreme mental achievement is the ability to judge other people by their own standards, and a crank is not necessarily a person whose rules of life and conduct do not coincide with our own.

To this thirst for power may be traced all of woman's vanity. It is commonly supposed that she dresses to please others, but she often values fine raiment principally because it shows how much her husband thinks of her. If a man's coat is shiny at the seams and he postpones the new one that his wife may have an extra hat, she is delicately flattered by this unselfish tribute to her charm.

From a single root vanity spreads and flowers until its poisonous blooms affect all social life. A woman becomes vain of her house, her rugs, her tapestries, her jewels, horses, and even of the livery of her footman. The things which should be valued for their intrinsic beauty and the pleasure-giving quality, which is not by any means selfish, soon become food for a vice.

A Mote in the Sun

She gradually grows to consider herself a very superior person. She is so charming and so much to be desired, that some man works night and day in his office, sacrificing both pleasure and rest, that she may have the baubles for which she yearns.

It is not far from absolute self-satisfaction, in either man or woman, to generous bestowal of enlightenment upon the unfortunate savages who linger on the outskirts of one's social sphere.

In the infinite vastness of creation, where innumerable worlds move according to the fiat of majestic Law, there lies one called Earth. There are planets within reach of the scientific vision of its inhabitants that are many times larger. There are some which have more moons, more mountains and rivers, longer days, and longer years. Countless suns, the centres of other vast planetary systems, lie in the inconceivable distances beyond.

In the midst of this unspeakable greatness, Earth swings like one of the motes which a passing sunbeam illumines. Upon this mote, one fifth of the inhabitants have assumed supreme knowledge and understanding, given

Narrowing Circles

them, doubtless, because of their innate superiority. This preferment, also, is theirs by the grace of an infinitely just and merciful God.

The other four fifths are supposedly in total darkness, though the same heavens are over their heads, the same earth under their feet, and though the light of sun and moon and the gentle radiance of the stars are freely given to all.

There are the same opportunities for development and civilisation, but they have not received The Enlightenment. To them must go the foreign missionaries, to teach the things which have been graciously given them on account of their innate superiority.

Man's life is a succession of narrowing circles. He admits the force of the heliocentric idea, for it is the sun which gives light and heat. Then the circle narrows, almost imperceptibly, for, of all the planets which circle around the sun, is not Earth the chief?

This point being gained, he is inside the geocentric circle. Earth is the centre of creation. Sun, moon, and stars are auxiliary forces, bountifully arranged by the Giver of

By Strength of Mind and Arm

all Good for Earth's beauty and comfort. Of all the creatures who share in this, is not man the most important? Thus he retreats to the anthropocentric circle.

Man is the centre of organic life, and it is easily seen that his race is far superior to the others. Their skins are not the same colour, their ships are not so mighty, their cunning with weapons is infinitely less. His race is dominant by strength of mind and arm.

The dark-skinned races must be taught civilisation, with fire and sword, with cannon and bayonet, with crime and death. They must be civilised before they can be happy. The naked savage who sits beneath a palm tree, with his hut in the distance, while his wife and children hover around him, is happy only because he is too ignorant to know what happiness is.

In order to be rightly happy, he must have a fine house, carriages, and servants, and live in a crowded city where tall buildings and smoke limit one's horizon to a narrow patch of blue. He must struggle daily with his fellows, not for the necessaries of life, but for small pieces of silver and bits of green

The Sublime Egotism

paper, which are not nearly as pretty as glass beads.

The savage, unaccustomed to refinement, stabs or beheads his enemy. Civilisation will teach him the uses of poison, and that putting typhoid germs into the drinking water of an Emperor is much more delicate and fully as effectual.

From this small circle, it is only a step to the centre and to that sublime egotism which has been named Vanity.

Man repeats in his own life the development of a nation. He progresses from unquestioning happiness to childish inquiry and wonder, from fairy tales of princes and dragons to actual knowledge ; through inquiry to doubt, through faith to disbelief, through civilisation to decay.

He is not content to let other nations and others races pursue their normal development. He insists that the work of centuries be crowded into a generation. And in the same manner, the growth and strivings of his fellows call forth his unselfish aid. Having infinite treasures of mental equipment, gained by superior opportunity and wider experience,

Personal Vanity

he will generously share his noble possessions.

It is personal vanity of the most flagrant type which intrudes itself, unasked, into other people's affairs. There are few of us who do not feel capable of ordering the daily lives of others, down to the most minute detail.

We know how their houses should be arranged, how they should spend and invest their money, how they should dress, how they should comport themselves, and more definitely yet do we know the things they should not do. We know what is right and what is wrong, while they, poor things! do not. We know whom and when they should marry, how their children should be educated and trained, and what servants they should employ.

We know for what pursuit each one is best fitted and how each should occupy his spare time. We know to what church all should go; what creed all should believe. We know what particular traits are faults and how these can be corrected. We know so much about other people that we often have not time to give due attention to ourselves. We neglect

Theoretically

our own affairs that we may unselfishly direct others, and sometimes suffer in consequence, for nobody but a lawyer makes a good living by attending to other people's business.

Theoretically, this should be pleasing to each one. Every person of sense should be delighted at being told just what to do. It would relieve him from all care, all responsibility ; the necessity for thought, planning, and individual judgment would be wholly removed.

The musical student would not have to select his own instrument, his own teacher, nor even his own practice time. Every author would know just how and when to write, and in order to become famous, he need only act upon the suggestions for stories and improvement of style which are gratuitously given him from day to day, by people who cannot write a clear and correct sentence. This thing actually happened ; consequently it is just the theme for fiction. This plot, suitably developed, would make the nations sit up, and send the race by hundred thousands to the corner bookstore.

The cares incident to selecting a wardrobe

A Common Vanity

would be wholly removed. Every woman knows how every other should dress. Her sure taste selects at a glance the thing which will best become the other, and over which the Unenlightened may ponder for hours.

There is no more common vanity than claiming to "know" some particular person. We are "all things to all men." The two who love each other better than all the world beside, have much knowledge, but it is not by any means complete. "Souls reach out to each other across the impassable gulfs of individual being." And yet, daily, people who have no sympathy with us, and scarcely a common interest, will assume to "know" us, when we do not fully know ourselves, and when we earnestly hide our real selves from all save the single soul we love.

To assume intimate knowledge of the hundred considerations which make up a single situation, the various complexities of temperament and disposition which the personal equation continually produces in human affairs, of the imperceptible fibres of the web which lies between two souls, preventing always the fullest understanding, unless Love, the magician,

"I Told You So"

gives new sight—amounts to the proclamation of practical Omnipotence.

There is no position in life which is secure. No complication ever comes to our friends, which our advice, acted upon, would not immediately solve. If our most minute directions are not thankfully received and put into effect, there is always the comforting indication of superiority—"I told you so."

And when the jaded soul revolts in supreme defiance, declaring its right to its own life, its own duties, its own friendships, and its own loves, there is much expressed disgust, much misfortune predicted, and, saddest of all, much wounded vanity.

The dominant egotism forbids that anything shall be better than itself. No success is comparable to one's own, no life so wisely ordered, and there is nothing so sad as the fame attained by those who do not follow our advice.

Adversity is commonly accepted as the test of friendship, but there is another more certain still — success. Anyone may bestow pity. It is fatally easy to offer to those less fortunate than ourselves; whose capabilities

Advice

have not proved adequate, as ours have ; but it requires fine gifts of generous feeling to be genuinely glad at another's good fortune, in which we cannot by any possibility hope to share.

Advice is usually to be had for the asking. In the case of a corporation attorney or a specialist, there is a high value placed upon it, but it is to be freely had from those who love us, and, strangely enough, from those who do not.

It is one of the blessings of love, that all the experience of another, all the battles of the other soul, are laid open for our better understanding of our own path. But there is a subtle distinction between the counsel of love and that of vanity. The one is unselfishly glad of our achievements, taking new delight in every step upward, while the other passes over triumphs in silence and carps upon the misfortune until it is not to be borne.

From the intimate union of two loving souls, Vanity is forever shut out. Jealousy dare not show her malignant face. These two are facing the world together, side by side and shoulder to shoulder, each the other's strength and shield.

The Sanctuary of that Other Soul

Success may come only after many failures ; the tide may not turn till after long discouragement and great despair. But in the union with that other soul, so gently baring its inmost dream that the other may understand, defeat loses its sting.

Ambition forever beckons, like a will o' the wisp. When realisation seems within easy reach, the dream fades, or another, seemingly unattainable, mockingly takes its place. But in the sanctuary of that other soul, there is always new courage to be found. Long aisles and quiet spaces lessen the fever and the unrest. Darkness and cool shadows soothe the burning eyes, and in the clasp of those loving arms there is certain sleep.

Vanity cares for nothing which is not in some way its own, and it is perhaps an amorphous vanity, as carbon is akin to a diamond, that makes a hard-won victory doubly dear.

There are always sycophants to fawn and flatter, there are hands that will gladly help that they may claim their share of the result, but that realised dream is wholly sweet in which only the dreamer and the other soul

The Bitter Proof

have fully believed. Failure, even, is more easily borne if it is entirely one's own ; if there is no one else to be blamed.

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." So spake the prophet in Jerusalem and the centuries have brought the bitter proof. Vanity has reared palaces which have vanished like the architecture of a mirage. Vanity has led the hosts against itself.

Where are Babylon and Nineveh; the hanging gardens and the splendour of forgotten kings? Where are Cæsar and Cleopatra; Trianon and Marie Antoinette? Where is the lordly Empire of France? Is it buried with military honours, in the grave of the exiled Napoleon?

Vanity's pomp endureth for a day, but Vanity itself is perennial. Vanity sets whole races of men in motion, pitting them against each other across intervening seas.

One woman has a stone, no larger than a pea, brought from a mine in South Africa. Vanity sets it proudly upon her breast and leads other women to envy her its possession, for purely selfish reasons. One woman's gown is made from a plant which grows in

All is Vanity

Georgia and she is unhappy because it is not the product of a French or Japanese worm.

One woman's coat is woven from the covering of a sheep, and she is not content because it has not cost a greater number of silver pieces and more bits of green paper, besides the life of an Arctic seal, that never harmed her nor hers.

Vanity allows a tender-hearted woman, who cannot see a child or a dumb brute in pain, to order the tails of her horses cut to the fashionable length and to wear upon her hat the pitiful little body of a song-bird that has been skinned alive.

Vanity permits a woman to trim the outer garments of the little stranger for whose coming she has long waited and prayed, with pretty, fluffy fur torn from the unborn baby of another mother—who is only a sheep. Vanity permits a woman to insist that her combs and pins shall be real tortoise-shell, which is obtained from the quivering animal by roasting it alive before a slow fire.

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" The mad race still goes on. It is insatiate vanity which wrecks lives, ruins homes, torments

one's fellows, and blinds the clear vision of its victims. It harms others, but most of all one's self.

The Conqueror

There is only one place from which it is shut out — from the union with that other soul. Great as it is, there is still a greater force ; there is the inevitable conqueror, for Vanity cannot exist side by side with Love.

Widowers and Widows

IN MEMORIAM
MEMORIAM

Widowers and Widows

The Charm

NEXT to burglars, mice, and green worms, every normal girl fears a widow. Courtships have been upset and expected proposals have vanished into thin air, simply because a widow has come into the game. There is only one thing to do in such a case ; retreat gracefully, and leave the field to her.

A widow's degree of blandishment is conservatively estimated at twenty-five spinster power. At almost every session of spinsters, the question comes up for discussion. It is difficult to see just where the charm lies.

A widow has, of course, a superior knowledge of ways and means. She has fully learned the value of silence, of food, and of judicious flattery. But these accomplishments may be acquired by the observing spinster who gives due attention to the subject.

The mystery lies deeper than is first suspected. It is possible that the knowledge of her own limitations has something to do with

The Pedestal Idea

it. A girl who has been flattered, adored, placed upon a pedestal and worshipped, naturally comes to the conclusion that she belongs there. She issues her commands from that height and conveys to man various delicate reminders of his servility.

When the same girl is married and by due operation of natural law becomes a widow, she doubtless has come to a better understanding of the pedestal idea. Hence she does not attempt the impossible, and satisfies herself with working those miracles which are comparatively simple.

A widow has all of the freedom of a girl, combined with the liberty of a married woman. She has the secure social position of a matron without the drawback of a husband. She is nearer absolute independence than other women are ever known to be.

Where a girl is strong and self-reliant, a widow is helpless and confiding. She can never carry her own parcels, put on her own overshoes, or button her own gloves. A widow's shoe laces have never been known to stay tied for any length of time, unless she has shapeless ankles and expansive feet.

The Inference

A widow's telegrams must always be taken to the office by some man. Time-tables are beyond her understanding and she never knows about trains. It frequently takes three or four men to launch a widow upon a two-hundred-mile journey, while a girl can start across the continent with considerably less commotion.

The inference is, of course, that she has been accustomed to these delicate attentions—that the dear departed has always done such things. The pretty way in which she asks favours carries out the delusion. He would be a brute, indeed, who could refuse the little service for which she pleads.

The dear departed, naturally, was delighted to do these things, or he would not have done them—such being the way of the married man. Consequently, the lady was very tenderly loved—and men follow each other like sheep in matters of the heart.

The attraction a widower has for a girl is in inverse proportion to a widow's influence over a man. It is true that the second wife is usually better treated than the first, and that the new occupant of a man's heart reaps the

The Food of her Soul

benefit of her predecessor's training. But it is not until spinsterhood is fully confirmed by grey hair and the family Bible that a girl begins to look with favour upon the army of the detached.

It seems to her that all the romance is necessarily gone — and it is romance upon which her soul feeds. There can be none of that dear delight in the first home building, which is the most beautiful part of marriage to a girl. Her pretty concern about draperies and colours is all an old story to the man. She may even have to buy her kitchen ware all alone, and it is considered the nicest thing in the world to have a man along when pots and pans are bought.

If widowers and widows would only mate with each other, instead of trespassing upon the hunting grounds of the unmarried! It is an exceptional case in which the bereaved are not mutually wary. They seem to prefer the unfair advantage gained by having all the experience on one side.

The normal man proposes with ease and carelessness, but the ceremony is second nature to a widower. If he meets a girl he likes, he

proceeds at once to business and is slow indeed for his kind if he does not offer his hand and heart within a week.

A Nice Letter

A clever man once wrote a story, describing the coming of a girl to a widower's house. With care and forethought, the dying wife had left a letter for her successor, which the man fearlessly gave her before she had taken off her hat, because, as the story-teller naïevely adds, "she was twenty-eight and very sane."

This letter proved to be various admonitions to the bride and earnest hopes that she might make her husband happy. It was all very pretty and it was surely a nice letter, but no woman could fail to see that it was an exquisite revenge upon the man who had been rash enough to install another in the place of the dead.

There was not a line which was not kind, nor a word which did not contain a hidden sting. It would be enough to make one shudder all one's life — this hand of welcome extended from the grave. Yet everything continued happily — perhaps because a man wrote the story.

A woman demands not only all of a man's

A Hidden Heartache

life, but all of his thoughts after she is dead. The grave may hide much, but not that particular quality in woman's nature. If it is common to leave letters for succeeding wives, it is done with sinister purpose.

Romance is usually considered an attribute of youth, and possibly the years bring views of marriage which are impossible to the younger generation. No girl, in her wildest moments, ever dreams of marrying a widower with three or four children, yet, when she is well on in her thirties, with her heart still unsatisfied, she often does that very thing, and happily at that.

Still, there must be a hidden heartache, for woman, with her love of love, is unable to understand the series of distinct and unrelated episodes which make up the love of a man. It is hard to take the crumbs another woman has left, especially if a goodly portion of a man's heart is suspected to lie in the grave.

It is harder still, if helpless children are daily to look into her face, with eyes which are neither hers nor his, and the supreme crucifixion in the life of a woman whose ideals have not changed, is to go into a home

which has been made by the hands of a dead and dearly loved wife.

Day by Day

To a woman, material things are always heavily laden with memories. There is not a single article of furniture which has not its own individuality. She cannot consider a piece of embroidery apart from the dead hands that made it, nor a chair without some association with its previous occupants.

Sometimes the rooms are heavily laden with portraits which are to confront her from day to day with the taunting presence. She is obliged to tell callers that the crayon upon the opposite wall is "the first Mrs. ——." There are also pictures of the first wife's dead children, and here and there the inevitable photograph, of years gone by, of bride and groom in wedding garments—the man sitting down, of course, while his wife stands behind him, as a servant might, with her hand upon his chair.

Day by day, those eyes are fixed upon her in stern judgment. Her failings and her conscious virtues are forever before that other woman. Her tears and her laughter are alike subjected to that remorseless scrutiny.

A Sheeted Spectre

Does she dare to forget and be happy? The other woman looks down upon her like a sheeted spectre conveying a solemn warning. "You may die," those pictured lips seem to say, "and some other will take your place, as you have taken mine." When the tactlessness, bad temper, or general mulishness of man wrings unwilling tears from her eyes, there is no sympathy to be gained from that impalpable presence. "You should not have married him," the picture seems to say, or; "He treated me the same way, and I died."

She is not to be blamed if she fancies that her husband also feels the presence of the other. As she pours his coffee in the morning and he looks upon her with the fond glance which men bestow upon women about to give them food, she may easily imagine that he sees the other in her place. Even the clasp of her hand or the touch of her lips may bring a longing for that other, hidden in the far-off grave.

Broadly speaking, widowers make better husbands than widows do wives. The presence of the dead wife may be a taunting

"A Shining Mark"

memory, but seldom more. It is not often that she is spoken of, unless it is to praise her cooking. If she made incomparable biscuits and her coffee was fit to be the nectar of the gods, there are apt to be frequent and tactless comparisons, until painful experience teaches the sinner that this will not do.

On the contrary, a widow's second husband is often the most sincere mourner of her first. As time goes on, he realises keenly what a doleful day it was for him when that other died. "Death loves a shining mark," and that first husband was always such a paragon of perfection that it seems like an inadvertence because he was permitted to glorify this sodden sphere at all. She keeps, in heart at least, and often by outward observance, the anniversaries of her former engagement and marriage. The love letters of the dead are put away with her jewels and bits of real lace.

Small defections are commented upon and odious parallels drawn. Her home is seen to be miserably inadequate beside the one she once had. Her supply of pin money is painfully small, judged by the standard which has hitherto been her guide. Callers are

The Best Advertisement

entertained with anecdotes of "my first husband," and her dinner table is graced with the same stories that famous raconteur was wont to tell.

If her present husband pays her a compliment, he is reminded that his predecessor was accustomed to say the same thing. The relatives of the first wife are gently made aware that their acquaintance is not desired. His manner of life is carefully renovated and his old friendships put away with moth balls and camphor, never to see the light again.

Yet the best possible advertisement of matrimony is the rapidity with which the bereaved seek new mates. There is no more delicate compliment to a first marriage than a second alliance, even when divorce, rather than death, has been the separating agency. A divorced man has more power to charm than a widower, because there is always the supposition that he was not understood and that his life's happiness is still to come.

Forgetting is the finest art of life and is to be desired more than memory, even though Mnemosyne stands close by Lethe and with her dewy finger-tips soothes away all pain.

Forgetting

The lowest life remembers; to the highest only is it given to forget.

Yet, when the last word is said, this is the dread and the pity of death. It is not "the breathless darkness and the narrow house," but the certain knowledge that one's place can almost instantly be filled. The lips that quiver with sobs will some day smile again, eyes dimmed by long weeping will dance with laughter, hearts that once ached bitterly will some day swell and overflow with a new love.

This knowledge lies heavily upon a woman's soul and saddens, though often imperceptibly, the happiest marriage. All her toil and striving may some day be for naught. The fruits of her industry and thrift may some day gleam in jewels upon the white throat of another woman. Silks and laces which she could not have will add to the beauty of the possible woman who will ascend her vacant throne.

Sometimes a woman remains faithful to a memory, and sometimes, though rarely, a man may do the same. There is only one relation in life which may not be formed again—that between a mother and her child.

The Child Upon Her Breast

The little one may have lived but a few days, yet, if it has once lain upon her breast, she has something Death may never hope to destroy. Other children, equally dear, may grow to stalwart manhood and gracious womanhood, but that face rises to immortality in a world of endless change.

No single cry, no weak clasp of baby fingers is ever forgotten. Through all the years, unchanging, and taking on new beauty with every fleeting day, the little face is still before her. And thus in a way Death brings her a blessing, for when the others have grown she has it still — the child upon her breast.

Love's best gifts are not to be taken away. Tender memories must always be inwoven with the sad, and the sympathy and unselfishness which great loves ever bring are left to make sweet the nature of one who is chastened by sorrow. Grief itself never stings; it is the accusing conscience which turns the dagger remorselessly in the heart.

Life, after all, is a masquerade. We fear to show our tenderness and our love. We habitually hide our best feelings, lest we be

Our unsuspected Kindness

judged weak and emotional, and unfit for the age in which it is our privilege to move. Sometimes it needs Death to show us ourselves and to teach our friends our deep and unsuspected kindness.

The woman who hungers throughout her marriage for the daily expression of her husband's love, often looks longingly towards the day to come, when hot tears will fall upon her upturned face and that for which she has vainly thirsted will be laid upon her silent lips. But swiftly upon the vision comes the thought, that even so, it would be of short duration; that the newly awakened love would soon be the portion of someone else.

It would be a beautiful world, indeed, if we were not at such pains to hide our real selves—if all our kindly thoughts were spoken and all our generous deeds were done. No one of us would think of Death as our best friend, if we were not all so bitterly unkind. Yet we put into white fingers the roses for which the living might have pleaded in vain, and too often, with streaming eyes, we ask pardon of the dead.

Atonement

Atonement is not to be made thus. A costly monument in a public square is tardy appreciation of a genius whose generation refused him bread. A man's tears upon a woman's hands are not enough, when all her life she has prayed for his love.

There is no law so unrelenting as that of compensation. Gravitation itself may be more successfully defied. It is the one thing which is absolutely just and which is universal in its action, though sometimes as slow as the majestic forces which change rock to dust.

We cannot have more joy than we give — nor more pain. The eternal balance swings true. The capacity for enjoyment and the capacity for suffering are one and the same. He who lives out of reach of sorrow has sacrificed his possible ecstasy. "He has seen only half the universe who has not been shown the House of Pain."

"And yet the compensations of calamity are made apparent to the understanding also after long intervals of time. A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of friends, seems at the moment unpaid loss and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the

Emerson's "Compensation"

deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius ; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminating an epoch of infancy or youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation or a household or style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. It permits or constrains the formation of new acquaintances, and the reception of new influences that prove of the first importance to the next years ; and the man or woman who would have remained a sunny garden flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener is made the banian of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighbourhoods of men."

That life alone is worth the living which sets itself upon the upland ways. To steel one's self against joy to be spared the inevitable hurt, is not life. We are afraid of love, because the might and terror of it has

sometimes brought despair. We are afraid of belief, because our trust has been betrayed. We are afraid of death, because we have seen forgetfulness.

We should not fear that someone might take our place in the heart that loves us best — if we were only loved enough. The same love is never given twice ; it differs in quality if not in degree, and when once made one's own, is never to be lost.

There are some natures whose happiness is a matter of persons and things ; some to love and some to be loved ; the daily needs amply satisfied, and that is enough for content.

There are others with whom persons and things do not suffice, whose love is vital, elemental, and indestructible. It has no beginning and no end ; it simply is. With this the Grey Angel has no power ; the grave is robbed of its victory and death of its sting.

"Love never denied Death and Death will not deny Love." When the bond is of that finer sort which does not rely upon presence for its permanence, there is little bereavement to be felt. For mutely, like a guardian angel, that other may live with us still ; not as

The Wanderer's Rest

a shadowy presence, but rather as a dear reality.

That little mound of earth upon the distant hill, over which the sun and stars pass in endless sequence, and where the quiet is unbroken through the change of spring to autumn, and the change of autumn to spring, has not the power to destroy love, but rather to make it more sure.

The one who sleeps is forever beyond the reach of doubt and misunderstanding. Separation, estrangement, and bitterness, which are sometimes concealed in the cup that Life and Love have given, are forever taken out by Death, who is never cruel and who is often kind.

We tread upon earth and revile it, forgetting that at last it hides our defects and that through it our dead hearts climb to blossom in violets and rue. Death is the Wanderer's Rest, where there is no questioning, but the same healing sleep for all. In that divine peace, there is no room for regret, since the earthly loves are sure of immortality.

As much as is vital will live on, unchanging, changeless, and taking on new sweet-

While the Dream Seemed True

ness with the years. That which is not wholly given, which is ours only for a little time, will fade as surely as the roses in the marble hands. Death has saved many a heart-ache, by coming while the dream still seemed true.

In a single passage, Emerson has voiced the undying beauty and the everlasting truth which lie beneath the perplexities of life.

"Oh, believe as thou livest, that every sound which is spoken over the round world, which thou oughtest to hear, will vibrate on thine ear. Every proverb, every book, every byword which belongs to thee for aid or comfort, shall surely come home, through open or winding passages. Every friend, whom not thy fantastic will, but the great and tender heart in thee craveth, shall lock thee in his embrace. And this, because the heart in thee is the heart of all; not a valve, not a wall, not an intersection is there anywhere in nature, but one blood rolls uninterruptedly an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and, truly seen, its tide is one."

Sometimes, into two hearts great enough to

The Everlasting Love

hold it, and into two souls where it may forever abide, there comes the Everlasting Love. It is elemental, like fire and the sea, with the depth and splendour of the surge and the glory of the flame. It makes the world a vast cathedral, in which they two may worship, and where, even in the darkness, there is the peace which passeth all understanding, because it is of God.

When the time of parting comes, for there is always that turning in the road, the sadness is not so great because one must go on alone. Life grows beautiful after a time and even wholly sweet, when a man and a woman have so lived and loved and worked together, that death is not good-bye, but rather—"auf wiedersehen."

The Consolations of Spinsterhood

A. de Meer
1901

The Consolations of Spinsterhood

"A Great Miration"

THE attached members of the community are wont to make what Uncle Remus called "a great miration," when a woman deliberately chooses spinsterhood as her lot in life, rather than marriage.

There is an implied pity in their delicate inquiries, and always the insinuation that the spinster in question could never have had an offer of marriage. The husband of the lady leading the inquisition may have been one of the spinster's first admirers, but it is never safe to say so, for so simple a thing as this has been known to cause trouble in families.

If it is known positively that some man has offered her his name and his troubles, and there is still no solitaire to be seen, the logical hypothesis is charitably advanced, that she has been "disappointed in love." It is possible for a spinster to be disappointed in lovers, but only the married are ever disappointed in love.

A Cause of Stagnation

The married women who ask the questions and who, with gracious kindness, hunt up attractive men for the unfortunate young woman to meet, are, all unknowingly, one great cause of stagnation in the marriage-license market.

Nothing so pleases a woman safely inside the bonds of holy matrimony as to confide her sorrows, her regrets, and her broken ideals to her unattached friends. Many a woman thinks her ideal is broken when it is only sprained, but the effect is the same.

Was the coffee weak and were the waffles cold, and did Monsieur express his opinion of such a breakfast in language more concise than elegant? Madame weeps, and gives a lurid account of the event to the visiting spinster. By any chance, does a girl go from her own dainty and orderly room into an apartment strewn with masculine belongings, confounded upon confusion such as Milton never dreamed? Does she have to wait while her friend restores order to the chaos? If so, she puts it down in her mental note-book, upon the page headed "Against."

The small domestic irritations which crowd

That Pitiful Story

upon the attached woman from day to day, leaving crow's feet around her eyes and delicate tracery in her forehead, have a certain effect upon the observing. But worse than this is the spectre of "the other woman," which haunts her friend from day to day, to the grave—and after, if the dead could tell their thoughts.

If she has been safely shielded from books which were not written for The Young Person, Mademoiselle believes that marriage is a bond which is not to be broken except by death. It is a severe shock when she first discovers that death changes nothing ; that it is only life which separates utterly.

That pitiful story of "the other woman" comes from quarters which the uninitiated would never suspect. With grim loyalty, married women hide their hearts from each other. Many a smile conceals a tortured soul. When the burden is no longer to be borne, a spinster is asked to share it.

A woman will forgive a man anything except disloyalty to herself. Crimes which the law stands ready to punish rank as naught with her, if the love between them is untarn-

An Idle Flirtation

ished by doubt or mistrust. Any offence prompted by her own charm, even a duel to the death with a rival suitor, is easily condoned. But though God may be able to forgive disloyalty, in her heart of hearts no woman ever can.

More often than not, it is simply an idle flirtation, or, at the most, a passing fancy which the next week may prove transient and unreal. The woman with the heartache will say, with wet eyes and quivering lips: "I know, positively, that my husband has done nothing wrong. I would go to the stake upon that belief. He is only weak and foolish and a little vain, perhaps, and some day he will see his mistake, but I cannot bear to see him compromise himself and me in the eyes of the world. Of course, *I* know," she will say, proudly, "but there are others who do not,— who are always ready to suspect,— and I will not have them pity me!"

When nearly all the married friends a spinster has have come to her with the same story, the variations being individual and of slight moment, she begins to have serious doubts of matrimony as a satisfactory career.

Indifference

Women who have been married five, ten, and even twenty years; women with children grown and whom the world counts safely and happily married, will sob bitterly in the embrace of the chosen girl friend.

Indifference is the only counsel one has to offer, but even so, it gradually becomes the first of the steppes upon the heart-way which lead to an emotional Siberia.

Of course there are women who are insanely jealous of their husbands, and, more rarely, men who are jealous of their wives. Jealousy may be explained as innate vanity and selfishness or as a defect in temperament, but at any rate, it is a condition which is far past the theoretical stage.

It is hard for a spinster to understand why any woman should wish to hold a man against his will. A dog who has to be kept chained, in order to be retained as a pet, is never a very satisfactory possession. It seems natural to apply the same reasoning to human affairs, for surely no love is worth having which is not a free gift.

No girl would feel particularly flattered by a proposal, if it were put in this form: "Will

Behind Prison Bars

you marry me? No one else will." Yet the same girl, married, would gladly take her husband to a desert island, that she might be sure of him forever.

Love which needs to be put behind prison bars, that it may not escape, is not love, but attraction, fascination, or whatever the psychologists may please. A man chooses his wife, not because there are no other women, but in spite of them. It is a pathetic acknowledgment of his poor judgment, if he lets the world suspect that his choice was wrong.

There are some souls that hie them far away from civilisation, to convents, monasteries, and western plains, that they may keep away from temptation. In the same fashion, woman tries to isolate her lord and master. If he meets women at all, they are those invisibly labeled "not dangerous."

The world makes as many saints as sinners, and the man who needs to be kept away from any sort of temptation is weak indeed. There are many of his kind, but he is the better man in the end who meets it face to face, fights with it like a soldier, and wins like a king.

The mother of Sparta bade her son return

The Thousand Foes

with his shield or on it, and the thought has potential might to-day. If a man honestly loves a woman, she need have no fear of the thousand foes that wait to take him from her. If he does not, the sooner she understands the truth, the better it is for both. There are many people who consider love a dream, but they usually grow to think of marriage as the cold breakfast.

Men are but children of a larger growth. A small boy forgets his promise to stay at home and tears madly down the street in the discordant wake of a band. The same boy, in later years, will follow his impulses with equal readiness, for he is taught conformity to outward laws, but very seldom self-control.

The fear of "the other woman" may be largely assuaged by a spinster's confidence in her ability to cope with the difficult situation, should it ever present itself, but there are other considerations which act as a discouragement to matrimony.

The chains of love may be sweet bondage, but freedom is hardly less dear. The spinster, like the wind, may go where she listeth, and there is no one to say her nay. A modern

Unlimited Credit

essayist has pointed out that "if a mortal knows his mate cannot get away, he is apt to be severe and unreasonable."

The thought of being compelled to ask for money, and perhaps to meet with refusal, frequently acts as a deterrent upon incipient love. A man is often generous with his sweetheart and miserly with his wife. In the days of courtship, the dollars may fly on wings in search of pleasure for the well-beloved, and yet, after marriage, they will be squeezed until the milling is worn smooth, the eyes start from the eagle, and until one half-way expects to hear the noble bird scream.

There are girls in every circle, married to men not by any means insolvent, who have unlimited credit, but never any money of their own. They have carriages but no car fare; fine stationery, monogrammed and blazoned with a coat of arms, but not by any chance a postage stamp.

Many a woman in such circumstances covenants with the tradespeople to charge as merchandise what is really cash, and sells laces and ribbons to her friends a little below cost, When a girl is approached with a plea to have

her purchases charged to her friend's account, and to pay her friend rather than the merchant, is it not sufficient to postpone possible matrimony at least six months? Adversity has no terrors for a woman; she will gladly share misfortune with the man she loves, but simple selfishness is a very different proposition.

"Wedded to their Art"

There are also the dazzling allurements offered by various "careers" which bring fame and perhaps fortune. The glittering triumphs of a prima donna, a picture on the line in the Salon, or a possible book which shall sell into the hundred thousands, are not without a certain charm, even though people who are "wedded to their art" sometimes get a divorce without asking for it.

The universal testimony of the great, that fame itself is barren, is thrust aside as of small moment. She does not realise that it is love for which she hungers, rather than fame, which is the admiration of the many. Sometimes she learns that "the love of all is but a small thing to the love of one" and that in a right marriage there would be no conscious sacrifice. If she were not free to continue the

The Vital Touch

work that she loved, she would feel no deprivation.

Happiness is often thrust aside because of her ideals. She demands all things in a single man, forgetting that she, too, is human and not by any means faultless. Some day, perhaps too late, she understands that love and criticism lie far apart, that love brings beauty with it, and that the marks of individuality are the very texture of charm, as the splendour of the opal lies in its flaws.

There is always the doubt as to whether the seeker may be the one of all the world to find the inmost places in her heart. Taste and temperament may be akin, position and purpose in full accord, and yet the vital touch may be lacking. Sometimes, in the after-years, it may be found by two who seek for it patiently together, but too often dissonance grows into discord and estrangement.

The march of civilisation has done away with the odium which was formerly the portion of the unattached woman. It is no disgrace to be a spinster, and apparently it is fitting and proper to be an old maid, since so many of them have "Mrs." on their cards, and

"A Discipline"

since there are so many narrow-minded and critical men who fully deserve the appellation.

There is no use in saying that any particular girl is a spinster from necessity rather than choice. One has but to look at the peculiar specimens of womankind who have married, to be certain that there is no one on the wide earth who could not do so if she chose.

Some people are fond of alluding to marriage as "a discipline," and sometimes a grey-haired matron will volunteer the information that "the first years of marriage are anything but happy." To one who has hitherto regarded it from a different point of view, the training-school idea is not altogether attractive.

Men and women who have been through it very seldom hold to their first opinions. It is considered as a business arrangement, a social contrivance, sometimes as an easy way to make money, but by very few as the highest form of happiness.

The consolations of spinsterhood are mainly negative, but the minus sign has its proper place in the personal equation. "The other woman" does not exist for the spinster, save

Small Extravagances

as a shadowy possibility. She is not asked what she did with the nickel which was given her day before yesterday, and thus forced to make confession of small extravagances, or to reply, with such sweetness as she may muster, that she bought a lot on a fashionable street with part of it, and has the remainder out at interest. She does not have to stay at home from social affairs because she has no escort, for the law has not apportioned to her a solitary man, and she has a liberty of choice which is not accorded her married friend.

She is not subjected to the humiliation of asking a man for money to pay for his own food, his own service, and even his own laundry bill. She can usually earn her own, if the gods have not awarded her sufficient gold, and there is no money which a woman spends so happily as that which she has earned herself.

The "career" lies before her, and she has only to choose the thing for which she is best fitted, and work her way upward from the lowest ranks to the position of a star of the first magnitude. Opportunity is but

The Greatest Consolation

another name for health, obstacles make firm stepping-stones, and that which is dearly bought is by far the sweetest in the end. Of course there are "strings to pull," but no one needs them. Success is more lasting if it is won in an open field, without favour, and in spite of generous measures of it bestowed upon the opposition.

But of all the consolations of spinsterhood, the greatest is this,—that out of the dim and uncertain future, perchance in the guise of a divorced man or a widower with four children, The Prince may yet come.

"On his plain but trusty sword are these words only—Love and Understand." Across the unsounded, estranging seas, with a whole world lying immutably between, he, too, may be waiting for the revelation. He may come as a knight of old, with banners, jewels, and flashing steel, to the clarion ring of trumpet or cymbal, or softly, in the twilight, like one whose presence is felt before it is made known.

Out of the city streets The Prince may come, tired of the endless struggle, when the tide of the human has beaten heavily upon

At the First Meeting

his jaded soul, or through the woods, with the silence of the forest still upon him. His path may lie through an old garden, where marigold and larkspur are thickly interwoven, and shadowy spikes of mignonette make all the summer sweet, or through the frosty darkness, when the earth is dumb with snow and the midnight stars have set the heavens ablaze with spires of sapphire light.

Sometimes, at the first meeting The Prince is known, by that mysterious alchemy which lies in the depths of the maiden soul, and often, after long waiting, a friend throws off his disguise and royalty stands revealed. Sometimes he is the comrade of the far-off childish years, the schoolmate of a later time, or someone whose hand has proved a strength and solace in times of deepest grief.

"To Love and Understand!" All else may be forgiven, if he has but these two gifts, for they are as the crest and royal robe. Bare and empty his hands may be, but these are the kingly rights.

Slowly, and sometimes with a strange fear which makes her tremble, there steals into her heart a great peace. With it comes in-

finite tenderness and an unspeakable compassion, not only for him, but for all the world. Love's laughter changes to questioning too deep for smiles or tears—the boundless aspiration of the soul toward all things true.

Through all the Years to Come

Playthings and tinsel are cast away. The music of the dance dies in lingering, discordant fragments, and in its place comes the full tone of an organ and the majestic movement of a symphony. The web of the daily living grows beautiful in the new light, for the Hand that set the pattern has been gently laid upon her loom.

Through all the years to come, they are to be together; he and she. There will be no terror in the wilderness, no sting in poverty or defeat—hunger and thirst can be forgotten. Wherever Destiny may point the way, they are to fare together—he and she.

Somewhere, in a world whose only shame is its uncleanliness, they two are to make a home and keep the little space around them wholly clean. Somewhere, they two will show the world that the old ideals are not lost; that a man and a woman may still live together in supreme and lasting content.

The Sceptre of the King

Somewhere, too, they will teach anew the old lesson, that it is unyielding Honour at the core of things that keeps them sound and sweet.

There is nothing in all life so beautiful as that first dream of Home; a place where there is balm for the tortured soul, new courage for the wavering soul, rest for the tired soul, and stronger trust for the soul caught in the snares of doubt and disbelief—a place where one may be wholly and joyfully one's self, where one's mistakes are never faults, where pardon ever anticipates the asking, where love follows swiftly upon understanding and understanding upon love.

"To Love and Understand!" He who holds the sceptre of the king may rule right royally. There is solace for the tired traveller within the cloister of that other heart, and the pitiful chains which some call marriage would rust and decay at the entrance to that holy place.

The spotless peace within the inner chamber is his alone. There his motives are never questioned, nor his words distorted beyond their meaning, and his daily purposes are ever read aright.

The Grey Angel and the Prince

The dream is forever centred upon the coming of The Prince. Sometimes, with the grim irony of Fate, he is seen when both are bound—and there are some who deem a heart-ache too great a price to pay for the revelation. Now and then, after many years, he comes to claim his own.

And sometimes, too, when one has long waited and prayed for his coming; when the sight has grown dim with watching and the frosty rime of winter has softly touched the dark hair, the Grey Angel takes pity and closes the tired eyes.

The lavender and the dead rose-leaves breathe a hushed fragrance from the heaps of long-stored linen; the cricket and the tiny clock keep up their cheery song, because they do not know their gentle mistress can no longer hear. The slanting sunbeams of afternoon mark out a delicate tracery upon the floor, and the shadow of the rose-geranium in the window is silhouetted upon the opposite wall. And then, into the quiet house, steals something which seems like an infinite calm.

But the dainty little lady who lies fast

The Exquisite Peace

asleep, with the sun resting caressingly upon her, has gained, in that mystical moment, both understanding and love. For there comes an exquisite peace upon her—as though she had found The Prince.

THE END.